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THE +
UNNATURAL MOTHER:
OR,
Innocent Love Persecuted.

Being the Genuine and most Affecting

HISTORY
OF THE

Tragical and Fatal Consequences that attended
the sincere and disinterested Passion of a GENTLEMAN
of an Eminent Station in the LAW, and a Young
LADY of a considerable Family in one of the politest
COURTS of EUROPE.

*In vain it is from Fate to fly,
Since first, or last, we all must dye :
And 'tis, as sure decreed above,
That first, or last, we all must Love.*

LANSDOWNE.



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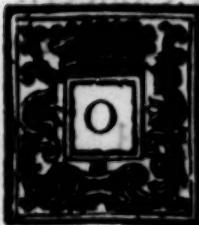


1832



THE

Unnatural Mother: OR, *Innocent Love Persecuted.*



N my Return from a Journey, which I took about two Years ago after the King, on account of some Affairs which I had then depending before the Council, I heard that the eldest *Mademoiselle de L'Epine* had been dead about three Months, and that she died in a very deplorable manner. I lamented her *Loss*, not that I was particularly acquainted with her, but because she was one of the greatest Beauties in the Neighbourhood. All the World spoke ill of *Desprez*, and told me a thousand Stories of his Barbarity; in short, they said so much, that although I did not know him by the Description that was made,

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and the Character that was given of him, I imagined he was Guilty. He was not at *Paris* when I arrived there, neither did he return thither 'till about three Months after.

As we had always been very good Friends, I went then to visit him, and finding him very pale and wan, fancy'd that he was just upon the Recovery from a Fit of Sicknes. When I entred the Room he was leaning upon a Table, his two Hands supporting his Head, but he rose up at the noise I made in entring, and my first Salutation drew him quite out of a profound *Reverie*, wherein he was buried. I saw before him a Letter lying open, whose writing seem'd to me to be a Woman's. We embraced each other, and I condoled with him on his ill State of Health, expressed my Concern for his Melancholy, and endeavoured to comfort him.

The Wound is here, my dear Friend, said he, laying his Hand upon his Heart, I shall never recover it; this said, the Tears came into his Eyes. He then took the Paper that was upon the Table, and kissing it, put it into a Purse, which he wore upon his Breast, like a Case for Relicks.

I perccived thererin the Picture of *Mademoiselle de L' Epine*; he began to sigh, and spoke to me with so much Disorder, and so little Coherence, that I pitty'd his Condition. I began then to have some Suspicion of the Matter, wherefore to divert his Sorrows, and to satisfy

tisfy my Doubts; this Letter, said I, ought not to have been delivered to you, at your just coming out of an Illness, and when you are so much alter'd for the worse; they ought to have spared you this Shock; for either I am greatly deceived, or 'tis that which causes your present Melancholy.

I have not been sick, answered he, nor is this Letter the Cause of my Sorrows, it only indulges them. I think I know the Hand, reply'd I, and believe it is *Mademoiselle de L' Epine's*; you are not mistaken, returned he, it is indeed her's. But how can she write to you, pursued I, when she is dead, as all the World says. She is so, continued he, would to Heaven she was not; I should not be here, but she would not be entirely lost to me.

At these Words his Grief increased more then ever, his Tears trickled down his Cheeks a main, and his redoubled Sighs gave me to understand, that there were some material Particulars in this Adventure, which were not come to the Knowledge of those who had been my Informers.

But, pursued I, why is the Death of this Woman so grievous to you, when you abandon'd her during her Life? Did I abandon her, reply'd he, with Hands and Eyes uplifted! Oh! God; how can any one be guilty of inventing such a Falshood? Tis the Belief said I, of the Publick; I value not the Belief of the Publick, added he; but cou'd you, that knew me, give Credit to it? And ought ton yuo

to have taken my Part? All Appearances are against you, reply'd I. They have imposed on all the World, said he, and I am not much in Pain about undeceiving them; but as for you, who judge so ill of me, I will disabuse you, although your little Esteem for me might excuse me from that Complaisance.

That shall be when you please, answer'd I. We are not in a convenient Place, reply'd he; but let us go out, and in walking, I will relate to you the Whole of that Affair. I took Advantage therefore of his good Disposition; and getting into my Coach we set out on the Road to *Vincennes*.

During the whole Way he scarcely open'd his Mouth, at least I only heard him sigh, and utter some Words indistinctly, which the Noise of the Wheels prevented my understanding. As soon as the Coach went on with less Noise, I begg'd him to oblige me with the Story he had promised, but cou'd not as yet get two Words together from him; at last, being come to the Wood, he made the Coach stop, and alighted without saying a Syllable to me. I follow'd him then, and he desired me to order our Servants to wait for us, after which, walking aside to a Place where we were sure of neither being overheard, nor interrupted, he began as follows.

In order to erase entirely from your Mind, said he, the false Impressions which the Publick may have made therein, I need only give you

a faithful Account of all that has pass'd between *Mademoiselle de L'Epine* and myself ; you will at once see my Innocence, and the ill Fortune that attended this poor Woman and me. I call her Woman, because she was actually my Wife ; you will besides know the Reason I have to mourn eternally, for having been the innocent Cause of her Death.

You know that, to my Misfortune, I am the only Son of one who is in great Power in the Law. I say to my Misfortune ; for if my Father had been a Man of less Credit and Authority, and had been less to be feared, I shou'd not be, as I now am, the most miserable of Mankind.

Mary-Magdalen de L'Epine, with whom you was acquainted, was the eldest of three Daughters, and one Son, whom their Father when dying, left under the Tuition of their Mother. He was an *Italian* by Extraction, of a good Family, but not rich. He came into *France* with Cardinal *Mazarin*, who had given him an Employment there till his Death, when he left his Widow involv'd in the World with the Affairs of her Family, and amongst the rest with a cursed Law-Suit, which is the Cause of all my Misfortunes, and which is not yet ended.

My Father cou'd be of great Service to her in the Decision of this Affair, which was soon expected, wherefore *Mademoiselle de L'Epine*, who liv'd pretty near our House, came thither frequent-

frequently to sollicit her Cause. She had powerful Recommendations, but if I had been Judge, the most powerful wou'd have been the lovely Daughter that accompany'd her. You have seen her; she had an exceeding fine Skin, was tall and well shap'd. Her Hair was the fairest that could be seen, her Face oval, and her Eyes blue, as fair Women's generally are. Her Beauty was lively, and had not a certain heavy Languor so common to all fair Women. The Tone of her Voice was insinuating and agreeable; her Behaviour was perfectly charming, and seem'd to desire nothing but Tenderness, and to breath nothing but Love, nor were her Looks deceitful.

Tis certain however, that she was not sway'd by the Pleasures of the Senses; as for her Soul, she deserv'd all that a Woman can pretend to; she was noble, sincere, frank, and liberal; capable of carrying on an Engagement to the last Gasp; fruitful in Inventions, fearful in taking Resolutions, but bold in putting them in Execution when taken; she was disinterested, a good Friend, and a more faithful Mistress.

She had so little Ambition, that I have heard her say a thousand Times, that if she had been Mistress of herself, she wou'd have preferr'd a poor and quiet Life to one full of Pomp and Honours, which cannot be acquir'd but at the Expence of one's Repose, and often of one's Sincerity; she was complaisant to me, because

cause she loved me, but otherwise she was naturally hasty.

I have seen her a thousand Times do Things to which no human Consideration cou'd have induced her, and that only because she knew they pleas'd me ; she was very reserved to me, yet very fond, but without Impudence ; and I have often seen her receive me in her Arms, and even seek my Embraces, at a Time when I knew that I shou'd have pleas'd her, in not taking Advantage of her Adyan- cies. In a Word she was the most accom- plish'd Mistress and Wife that can be con- ceived.

I saw her in a Hall where my Father used to hear Causes ; her Mother and she were waiting for his coming out of his Closet. I was surpriz'd at her Beauty ; and thinking I only did through Civility, what I did through the first Impulses of my Heart, I offer'd to introduce them to him. I took the Mother then by the Hand, and led her into the Closet : Here, Sir, said I to my Father, is a Mother and Daughter, which I present you ; they have been waiting a great while, and I thought they ought to have some Distinction shown them ; they have too good a Mien not to de- serve the Preference : If my Recommendation cou'd be of any Service to them, I would beg you to be their Friend. I then went out, and the Mother had Time to say what she would to him, for she staid with him above an Hour.

I met

I met them again at their coming out, as if by Chance, and ask'd them if they had been heard to their Satisfaction. Yes, Sir, answer'd the Mother, and 'tis a very great Obligation which we have to you. I have inform'd your Father of all the Tricks that are play'd me, and I hope he will soon do me Justice. I wish it depended upon me, Madam, said I, it should be done this very Day : She thank'd me, and they took their Leave. I perceiv'd that the Daughter had always blush'd when she look'd upon me, and that she had turn'd away her Head when ever I cast my Eyes on her.

I set a Footman upon the Watch, to give me Notice of an Evening when they were at their Door, not the Mother, whom I did not want, but her amiable Daughter, with her Sisters. I went thither very frequently, and sometimes we took a Walk upon the Rampsarts, and in the Gardens ; but I cou'd neither get an Opportunity of talking apart to her Daughter, nor of having a private Conversation with her alone. I was very well receiv'd however, not only on account of the Services which I had done them, but also on account of those which I might render them for the future.

When the Weather would no longer allow us to take the Diversion of Walking, I went to their House, and made one at Cards. We play'd there for a meer Trifle ; wherefore, with a View only to keeping up the Conversation, and to have a Pretence to go thither every Evening,

Evening, I managed Matters, so as to form a Set Company, which held together for a long Time.

In order to this, I told them that what we play'd for being but a Trifle, the only way to continue the Society with as much Pleasure as it begun, would be to contrive some Diver-
sion ; that to that End we must choose one of the Ladies Treasurer, by the Plurality of Voices, to whose Custody all the Money should be committed ; that the Winners should pocket none of their Winnings, and that the Losers should pay to the Stock ; to the end that when there was enough in Bank, it should be laid out in a Party of Pleasure, where no Body should disburse any thing, and yet where we should all be agreeably diverted.

The Proposal was accepted, and the Company settled : We were eight in all ; viz. the two eldest Daughters, two young Gentlewo-
men of the Neighbourhood, and the Lovers of all the four. I shall not name them, as their Names have no Relation to what I am going to say. We obliged our selves to be there every Evening, and it was agreed that the youngest Daughter should supply the Place of whoever should be absent, and that who-
ever 'twas, should be obliged to pay her Lo-
sings, or to give her as much as she should win : This last Condition was not agreed on without some Difficulty, the Mother and the

Daughters all opposing it ; but, however, at last, they did consent to it.

The Ladies alone were exempted from paying the Forfeit, to which the Men were condemn'd in Case they fail'd coming : We would all have made this Forfeit somewhat considerable, but we were not allow'd to be the Masters in that Point : Nevertheless our Treasure would not have been much increased thereby, for we had all of us our seeret Views therein, which would not permit us to miss being there : The Forfeit of the Ladies was to kiss us all round, and the eldest *Mademoiselle de L' Epine*, was our Treasurer.

We play'd then every Evening, and I sought in vain an Opportunity of speaking to her alone, for I could find none, and was not a Jot the nearer. 'Tis impossible to be more reserved than she was for near four Monthes ; she perceiv'd very plainly that I did not look upon her with Indifference, and saw that something more then Play drew me to her Mother's ; but she avoided so carefully all Occasions of talking with me alone, that I could not say any Thing to her by Word of Mouth.

We open'd our Treasure at *Martlemas* ; and although we had play'd very low, it was enough to entertain us perfectly well, and our Company being select, we spent an Evening the most agreeably that ever I pass'd one in my Life. Nevertheless, we had not spent all, and every one was so well pleased, that

that it was resolved to go on playing, that we might have enough to be merry at the *Midnight Mass*, to choose *King* and *Queen*, and to conclude with a good Supper, and a handsome Ball on *Sbrove Tuesday*; and after our manner of playing, we did not doubt having enough to do Things after an elegant Manner. The Society then was re-united more firmly than before, and the Forfeits made greater.

Notwithstanding my Affiduity, however, I was but just where I was. My Mistress was all Day either with her Mother, or her Sisters; and, in the Evening, the Company gave her a thousand Opportunities of avoiding me, without shewing that she did it designedly. Nevertheless I was resolv'd to explain myself, and to know what I was to depend on: I loved her too well, to remain any longer in an Uncertainty, and not being able to speak to her in Person, I wrote the following Note.

L E T T E R.

YOU have too much Penetration, not to have observ'd my Sentiments for you; I have been able to explain myself only by my Eyes, but I believe they have express'd themselves pretty intelligibly. The Presence of so many People, with whom you are perpetually surrounded, and your Study to prevent my having any Opportunity of speaking to you, have obliged me to be silent. If you have no t

bitherto discern'd my Love, I will blame my Eyes, not much skill'd in that Language; but if you have discover'd it, and have understood their Looks, I will accuse you of Indifference, or rather of Cruelty to me: Deliver me from my Uncertainty; the whole Happiness of my Life depends upon your Answer.

I clapt this Note into her Hand, and she made a Motion, which made me fear that she had not taken it; nevertheless she did take it, blushing, and without looking upon me: After this, I observed that she did not play that Night with her usual Gaiety.

I return'd thither again next Day, and placed myself by her; she pretended to have let something drop, and in stooping slipt a Note into my Coat. I was too impatient to see what it contain'd, not to satisfy myself that Minute; wherefore I quitted my Cards, which I begg'd her Mother to hold for me, and went to read it in a Chamber adjoining. It was not long, being only an Appointment which she made me, to meet her next Morning at the *Sainte Chapelle*, whilst her Mother was to be at the *Palais* with her Lawyers. I went in then, and again took my Cards, very glad that my Intrigue began by an Assumption.

I did not fail being there, and she arrived a Minute after; and the Mass which I had pretended to hear being over, every Body went out,

out, and we were left almost alone in the Church. Then, the Moments being too precious to be lost, I drew near her , Well, *Mademoiselle*, said I, shall I now know what you are pleas'd shall be my Doom ? I don't know, answer'd she, what will be your Doom ; but as to what relates to myself, my Heart forebodes me no Good, which can possibly come of your Addresses ; and if I were to be ruled by its Misgivings, I should deprive you at once of all manner of Hope ; I should even beg you to come no more to my Mother's ; and, in short, should never look upon you whilst I live.

The Presages of your Heart, *Mademoiselle*, said I, are very fatal to me ; but do you feel nothing in that Heart which opposes them ? There must certainly, replied she, be some what stronger then them, since I no longer find myself in the same Resolution now I am with you, as I had taken the Night before last, and which brought me hither. I would not have broken off Correspondence with you, because I have enter'd into none ; but I would have begg'd you not to think of engaging in one, and have told you that you are too indifferent to me, for me to look upon you any otherwise then as my Duty requires: But — Here she stopt short, with Tears in her Eyes.

Go on, *Mademoiselle*, said I, explain that *But to me*. What would you have me say reply'd,

reply'd she, blushing ; I no longer find my self in the same Disposition as I was in this Morning. The Sanctity of the Place where we were, did not prevent my kissing her Hand with such Transports as I had never felt before, and as made me almost beside myself.

The Place, however, was not convenient for discoursing, those who had enter'd might have been scandaliz'd thereat ; wherefore I carry'd her to a Bookseller's near that Place, and we seated ourselves in his Shop. 'Twas the Way by which her Mother was to pass, and the Bookseller knowing me, we there treated of our Affairs fully, and without Affectation.

I thank'd her for her Sincerity ; she answer'd, that I ought not to judge the less favourably of her Virtue ; for that she did not know by what Force she had been hurry'd away, but she had lov'd me from the first Moment she saw me, and long before she had spoken to me. She added, that this was the Cause of her having follow'd her Mother without Reluctance in her Sollicitations, hoping that by going frequently to my Father's, she might at last find an Opportunity to speak to me, or at least to see me. She said farther, that she made this Confession, to the End that I might not believe her Affection to me, was the Effect of her Gratitude, nor of her Ambition, and that I might be satisfied that her Heart alone had made me her Choice.

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I said all that was possible, to assure her that she fill'd me with Joy by such a tender Declaration ; and in Return, drew her the most lively Picture that I could imagine of my Love. I believe, said she, that it is such as you represent it, and I wish it ; but, after all, you oblige me to take a Step, of which I fear I shall have sufficient Time to repent. You love me, you tell me so, and I believe it : I love you, I tell you so likewise ; What will be the Consequence of all this ?

You see plainly that we are not born for each other ; although I am of a good Family, it does not come near yours in *France* ; your Estate sets you a hundred Degrees above me, and I am too prudent to grant you any Thing that may ruin me in your Esteem : These are the Reasons which ought to determine me absolutely to see you no more ; for, in short, I see not the least Prospect of an happy Issue, either for you, or myself ; for you, because, besides the Time you would lose about me, you would create yourself Enemies of those on whom you depend ; and for my self, because all the World being convinced, that I must not pretend to be your Wife, will interpret your Visits to my Disadvantage, and that at least if it does not cost me my Innocence, as I hope it will not, I shall pay, with the Loss of my Reputation, for the Pleasure I shall have in seeing you.

I answer'd her, that I had already suggested to myself, all the Reasons which she could possibly alledge ; but that my Resolution was fix'd : That it was true, we ought not to hope to be united by a happy Marriage, during my Father's Life ; but that at least we might be permitted to love each other, to tell each other so, and to be marry'd unknown to him, since I was at Age ; that I would find Priests enough to marry us, if she would consent thereunto ; and that, afterwards, either the remote Parts of *France*, or foreign Countries, would furnish us with Places of Refuge, whither we might retire, till his Anger should be over.

In Answer to all this, she only turn'd her Head aside, and said that these were meer *Chimæra's* ; that she could not consent to a Marriage which would expose me to my Father's Anger, and oblige us to leave the Kingdom, supposing we should have Time enough so to do, which was to be doubted ; because, added she, if he should come to know it, tho' we should find a Priest bold enough to dare offend him, he would not fail, being so powerful as he is, to cause such a Marriage to be declared clandestine, and you to be declared free ; and to oblige me to pass the rest of my Days in a Convent, laugh'd at, and defam'd ; and undoubtedly very indifferent in your Eyes, by the Enjoyment of my Person, which would have given you a Disgust to me ; and that is
all

all I fear, for, as for the rest, I would not trouble myself about it: But you would cease to love me, and that is all which I apprehend, because I desire only your Heart, and the Loss of that would throw me into a real Despair: Or, if you should still love me, 'twould be only a Love founded upon Decency, which would not hold out against the ill Usage of your Father, and the Beauty of another Wife that might be offer'd you. I endeavour'd to dispel her Fears, by all that a Man so passionately in Love as myself could say, and did stagger her, but could not perswade her.

At last her Mother came by, and found us together, without suspecting the Reason; on the contrary, I have met you very fortunately, Sir, said she, I want such a Friend. I offer'd her all the Service that lay in my Power, and she ask'd me, if I knew such a Man, whom she nam'd to me. I told her that he was one of my most intimate Acquaintance, and that I was sure he would do me any Service. She answered me, that it depended wholly upon him, to suffer her to receive some Money which she had caus'd to be attach'd; that the Attachments of the other Creditors had been withdrawn, and that his, which was taken out but the Night before, hinder'd her being paid; that she did not desire he should do any Prejudice to his own Pretensions, by allowing her to replevin; that it would do him

no Injury, being only a Trick of her Adversary's, who had been to beg this Attachment, to prevent her being paid. I carry'd her Home, and my Friend, at my Request, gave her what she demanded ; she thank'd me, receiv'd her Money, and I conducted her to her House.

I went thither in the Evening according to Custom, and found her Daughter very melancholy and thoughtful. The Company ask'd her whether she was indispos'd ; she answer'd no, and added that she and I had read at a Booksellers, where her Mother had found us in the Morning, a Story of two Lovers whose Love had cost them their Lives. She own'd that this had left a very cruel Impression in her Mind : An invented Story, the Application whereof I did not like, and accordingly I sent her Word so next Day.

She gave me no Answer, neither could I ingage her to make me any Appointment, altho' I often desired it of her. I could not even get one Syllable in Writing from her ; this troubled me ; but I comforted myself, because I saw plainly that she put herself to some Constraint, in order to observe such cruel Appearances with me.

We spent the *Midnight-Mass* together, and we diverted ourselves very agreeably : Then *New-Year's Day* coming, I made Presents to all the Company, that I might have a Pretence to make one to her likewise. As

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for the rest, I came off for a Prayer-Book, a Pair of Gloves, a Cane, or a Snuff-Box, but not so with her ; besides a Pair of Gloves which I gave her in publick, I sent her a very fine Striking-Watch, and a Letter, wherein I made not the least mention of Love.

I knew very well that it would be seen, wherefore I only turned it off with a Jest ; accordingly I wrote her Word, that there happening Disputes at her House almost every Night, about leaving Play, which every one was willing to continue for the Benefit of the Society, and our Watches never agreeing together, it was proper, that we should all for the future, be ruled by her ; that no Body would make any Difficulty of trusting her, since no Body made any Scruple of intrusting her with the Stock of the Company.

My Letter was read publickly, and they obliged her to keep the Watch, which she would have return'd ; this was all that I desired. I delivered her another Letter, wherein I declared my Design, and told her that 'twas indifferent to me whether we left off Play sooner or later ; but that as I thought on her every Minute of the Day, I would oblige her to think of me, at least when she wanted to see what Hour it was. I begg'd her likewise to tell me when was the *Critical Minute*, and desir'd an Assignation, which I could not obtain.

Twelfth-Tide being come, we supp'd together thrice ; the *Carnival* pass'd over, and notwithstanding the Liberty allow'd at that Season, I was not a Jot the nearer ; however, although I was vex'd at this little Success, I was sure of being belov'd. The Looks she gave me from Time to Time, confirm'd to me what she had told me ; nevertheless I was not contented : But I met with some Crosses, which forwarded my Wishes, more than any Thing which I could have done.

My Father had taken Umbrage at my repeated Visits at *Mademoiselle de L' Epine's*. He said nothing thereof during the *Winter*, nor the *Carnival* ; but finding that *Lent* did not induce me to give over my Assiduities, he began to be afraid that the Mother, whom he knew to be very self-interested, would prevail on me to take some Step contrary to his Intentions. Not that he apprehended the Consequences thereof, but he would not run the Hazard of being one Day obliged to get an Engagement set aside, which he might prevent.

He began then by rallying me ; but seeing that I still continued my Visits, he forbad my going there : I did not obey him, and said nothing of this Prohibition, either to the Mother, or the Daughter. Hereupon he took it in his Head, that 'twas the Mother who made me rebel against his Commands, for which he ow'd her a Grudge, and was with-
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in a little of playing her a Law-Trick. However he did not, but satisfy'd himself with putting her in Fear thereof ; for tho' he is naturally cholerick and hasty, he has always been an upright Judge.

Accordingly, that Gentlewoman's Attorney surpriz'd her extremely, when he told her that my Father was greatly displeased with her. She was desirous of knowing for what ; for 'tis certain that when our Actions are innocent, we never imagine that they are suspected. She inform'd me that very Evening what her Attorney had said ; I knew very well the Reason, but took Care not to tell it her. The next Morning she came to beg me to obtain her a Hearing ; she was a Stranger to what had given Offence ; her Daughter and I had lived together with so much Reservedness, and so little Privacy had been observed between us, that it was impossible it should have caused any Suspicion, however I did not care for this coming to an Explanation : Wherefore I told her that my Father was not to be spoken with, and that he was lock'd up about an Affair that would take him up a long Time. I then begg'd her to return Home, and not stir out, promising that I would enquire myself, as also that I would send her Word if she could possibly speak with him that Day.

As she was sincere in her Intentions, she believed me, and was about to retire ; but as I
was

was leading her out, we met *M. Desprez* Face to Face. He had gone out of his Closet by a Back-Door, which open'd upon a Pair of Back-Stairs, and was returning thither again through the Court-Yard.

The Surprize wherein I appear'd at seeing him, confirm'd his Suspicions : Wherefore, I suppose you did not want me, Madam, said he, with some Spite. Pardon me, Sir, answer'd she, I came with Design to beg to be inform'd in what — And I likewise, cried he, interrupting her, had a mind to talk with you, and 'tis not too late now ; be pleas'd to walk into my Closet, I'll tell you what I had to say to you. She follow'd him, and I staid behind, rather dead then alive.

I then drew near the Closet-Door, whence I over-heard all. He accosted her very civilly at first, after which, he assum'd the Tone of a Man who would be obey'd. I don't in the least doubt, Madam, said he, but you and your Family are as discreet in Private as in Publick ; I neither believe that you, or your Daughters, put on when you go abroad, that virtuous Air which I have always observ'd in you, or that you leave it behind you at your Door, when you return home. I am satisfy'd that the Regularity of your House within, is as great, as 'tis to Appearance without Doors ; nevertheless my Son frequents your House every

every Day, notwithstanding my express Commands to the contrary.

I will not believe, that you are the Person; who makes him despise them, but the Publick is scandaliz'd at so much Assiduity, and may charge you with some Things that will do you no great Credit; prevent it, by forbidding *Desprez* your House, for I can't imagine you so simple, as to believe that his frequent Visits can be on any lawful Account: And if any of your Daughters should be so silly as to believe him, and to comply upon his Protestations, I assure you it would be so much the worse for her, that she will be the first deceiv'd, and the first that will repent her Easiness. I believe, as I have told you, that the Correspondence between them is innocent; but the World begins to talk, and that alone ought to oblige you to break it off.

Never was Surprize equal to that of *Madame de L' Epine*; if she had follow'd her first Inclinations, she would have resented it, by taking him up short, but she stood in need of his Interest, and that obliged her to speak in a softer Tone.

You discover to me, Sir, said she, many Things which I have never yet observ'd. I know not whether your Son has any Engagement at my House; but I swear to you, that if he has, I never perceiv'd it, and that those who are scandaliz'd thereat, certainly see more clearly into my Affairs then myself. I
have

have only suffer'd your Son's Company, because he is your Son, and might, as he has already, procure me the Means of speaking to you about my Business: He has been one of a Set-Company at Play, and that is the only Reason I know of his coming to my House.

I know very well, that my Daughters are not for him, in a Country where all Marriages are directed by Interest alone; but I beg you would believe that I have educated them too well, to fear their being Guilty of any Thing contrary to their Honour. Be so good, Sir, I conjure you, added she, as to tell me upon which of the three the Publick cast their Eyes. They name none, answered he, they make no Distinction between them, 'tis only his so frequent Visits which they blame. Then their Suspicions are only *Chimeras*, reply'd she; I promise you however, Sir, to put an End to them; and this very Day I will desire him, Sir, no more to honour us with his Visits: And I will do it in such a manner, as shall convince you that I did not draw them upon myself, on any account that could reasonably give you any Uneasiness.

There is no need, Madam, said he, of making a Clamour; we must not drive People out of our Houses with a Cudgel; the Noife you would make thereby, would give the World occasion to talk: They would say you only did it out of Spite; a civil Way is more decent: She promis'd to act according to his

Desire;

Desire ; after which, he talk'd with her about her curs'd Law-Suit, wherein he promis'd her all manner of Assistance, and began to keep his Word therein that very Day.

As their Discourse then was perfectly indifferent to me, I withdrew, without knowing what Resolution to take. If I went to her, I knew what Sort of a Compliment was to be expected ; if I did not go, 'twas the same Thing as if Sentence had been already pass'd upon me. However, I did not make my Appearance there 'till the next Day, before which I prepar'd a Letter for the Daughter, which I gave her without being seen, and which was as follows.

L E T T E R.

TO U R Predictions, Madam, begin to be accomplish'd ; and the Constancy which I have vow'd to you will soon become necessary : I know the Compliment which your Mother is preparing for me ; however, I will not avoid it to Day, because 'tis impossible for me to live any longer without seeing you. I suffer'd too much Yesterday, wherefore I resign myself up to all the Horrors of my Destiny ; the Order which I am soon to receive will be the Sentence of my Death, but I shall see you at least before I die. What Troubles arise in my Soul ! Why did not I confer with you Yesterday ! I should have begg'd you to con-

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ceal your Sentiments; I know them, but let them not be discovered by others. Seem cruel to me, cease your obliging Glances, treat me only with Indifference, I shall suspect the Motive, and every Body will be deceived therein. But hold, I should dye with Grief before your Face, if I should not observe Love and Tenderness therein; now is the Time that Assignations are necessary; your Reserves are no longer seasonable; make me then some Appointment; 'tis not my Business to offer to prescribe any to you. However I shall be at Mass to Morrow at the Minims; it will begin with me about Eight in the Morning, and will not end till long after Noon.

Having given her this Letter unseen, as I said before, I placed myself next her at Table, according to Custom. All the Society were there; and all the Society were informed of the Harangue that was to be made to me; wherefore they kept Silence for some Time, and at last the Mother address'd me as follows.

You would have deceived me, Sir said she, and have run the Risque of ruining me in the good Opinion of *M. Desprez*, of whom you know that I ought to make a Friend: I can't tell what may have been your Design therein, but I am very sate that you have bid very fair for my undoing. Your frequent Visits here give him Umbrage; I know, by what he has said to me, that he is apprehensive of the Consequences:

sequences: and I believe, Sir, that you will not take it ill if I prevent every Thing that may create me such an Enemy. Wherefore, although your Company does me a great deal of Honour, and more then your Father thinks I deserve; I must beg you not to give yourself that Trouble any more.

If I had never a Cause depending, added she, with a spiteful Air, and if my Law-Suit was decided, I should not, perhaps, be so condescending to his Will: I confess it to you, to the End that you may be satisfy'd, 'tis contrary to my Inclinations that I desire you not to come hither any more; 'tis not enough that your Behaviour is innocent, it must appear so likewise. This, Sir, continued she, is the Lecture that hath been preach'd to me; upon which I might give some Admonitions to others. They ascribe your Visits to a Cause that may do an Injury to the Reputation of my Daughters, of which I have as much, and yet more Reason to be careful, then of *M. Desprez's* Good-Graces, although all their Fortune and Substance depends thereon: Wherefore, Sir, you are too equitable to wish me ill, for a Thing, to which I am constrain'd on so many Accounts.

I grant it, Madam, reply'd I; my Father wou'd certainly do you some Differ-
service, since he has been so free as to tell
you so: But I will not be the Cause of any
Misfortunes happening to you. What drew
me hither is, that 'tis impossible to find

any where else such an agreeable and well chosen Company as ours ; I shall quit it however, without bearing you any ill Will. I know that you are compell'd to it ; wherefore, I protest to you, that I will not cease to be always the best Friend you have in the World ; and that you may depend upon me, when 'tis in my Power to do you any Service ; but I must have your Promise that you will not hate me. I don't think that ever I myself gave you any Reason ; and it is not just that I should be punished for my Father's unreasonable Suspicions. I would even have you permit me to assure you sometimes of my good Wishes ; I will come so seldom, that it shall cause you no new Disturbance. This was granted me, and thus was I banish'd *Made-moiselle de L' Epine's* ; but tho' I did not see her every Day, my Affairs went on but so much the better.

She did not fail coming next Morning to the *Minims*, although she could stay no longer than to appoint me to meet her the next Morning, in a Church at the farthest End of one of the Suburbs. Accordingly I went thither, and we staid together above three Hours, which did but render our Parting more grievous. At last I told her that it was impossible for me to live without seeing her, and that if she would not take Pitty on my Condition, she might expect to see me in a Convent, if my Sorrows alone did not put an End to my Life.

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She answer'd me, that she was in the very same Condition herself ; but, in short, said I, these Sorrows, and these Afflictions, will only make both you and me more unhappy. We must conclude, so many Assignations will be discover'd, unless they are in some private Place, which Place can only be a Chamber ; and if you should enter it any otherwise than as my Wife, you may happen to be known, and that would be the dreadfulest of Misfortunes. Come to a Resolution, pursued I ; I am of Age to dispose of myself : If my Father's Estate is in his own Power, altho' he has been able to get me banish'd from your House, my Mother's Fortune, with the Disposal of my Heart and Vows, are entirely at my own Discretion : Accept the Means which I offer you, of being united to each other, without its being in the Power of any one to prevent us.

What are the Means you propose ? said she ; provided my Honour may be safe, and I may believe myself innocent ; I will run any other Risque. To be married, replied I, without any one's knowing it but the Priest, and the Witnesses that will be necessary. Be it so, cry'd she, I will consent to whatever you please, and if I must be unhappy either Way, I had rather be so by sacrificing all to you : I cannot avoid my Destiny ; however violent your Love may be to me, it is by no means equal to that which I bear you. I as-
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sure you of it without Hesitation, to the End that you may justify to your self my Complaisance and Easiness, in complying with all the Steps which you are going to exact of me; and which I should not have taken, but through the Instigation of a Passion, whereof I am not Mistress.

You shall not repent, my dear *Magdalen*, said I, kissing her Hand, of any Measures wherein I shall engage you; I will give you an Answer as soon as all Things are in Readiness; you may even declare to your Mother our Sentiments for each other. I shall take Care of that, cry'd she, interrupting me, we ought to distrust her more than any one whatever; the Fear of losing her Law-Suit, would oblige her to sacrifice me, and I should soon be in a Convent. But how shall we do to see each other, said I, if no Body assists us therein? Time and Opportunity, answer'd she, will provide for that: But what is your Design, what are you going to do? I will inform you, reply'd I, when I have given Orders for every thing; rely upon me, I am too much in Love not to be as impatient as possible, and I will lose no Time in hastening our Happiness. But after what manner, continued I, shall I convey my Letters to your Hands, and receive your Answers?

That is not the most difficult Point, said she, I have consider'd upon it: When you have any Letter for me, have Recourse to no

Confi-

Confidant, convey it to me your self. How, resum'd I ? It must be as seldom as possible, reply'd she, that we may not run the Hazard of being discover'd. In order then to give me Notice thereof, make a white Mark on the Wall that is before my Windows ; that will serve me as a Signal, I will open my Casement, and at Night, *en passant*, you may throw your Letters therein with Safety. I will take with me the Key of my Chamber, and no Body shall enter therein but my self, or, at least, I will manage so as to be the first to observe what you have thrown there.

As for my Answers, it will require a little more Exactness ; when I have any to make, either by Word of Mouth, or Writing, my Flower-Pot shall be in the Window towards the Ramparts ; if 'tis on the other Side, don't expect any. When you know that you are to expect a Letter, you must be under my Window at Night punctually, when the Clock strikes Eleven, whether there is a Light or not, and take up whatever I throw out ; very few People pass by at such an unseasonable Hour : Besides, I will look whether you are there or no. Thus will you hear from me with Safety.

After this Conversation, I return'd to my Father's, in whose Countenance I observ'd a malicious Satisfaction : However, I did not seem to take any Notice thereof ; and because I imagin'd that he would have me dogg'd, I
was

was above a Week without seeing my Mistress, and nevertheless I staid at Home less then before.

My Precaution was not in vain ; I was dogg'd indeed, and gave Notice thereof to *Mademoiselle de L'Epine*, to the End that she might not be alarm'd at my Silence. I had observ'd the same Face three or four times in my Way ; I did not seem to take Notice thereof, but in order to see whether 'twas actually an additional Retinue, I sent away a Footman that I had with me, on Pretence of some Errand.

This was at the *Jesuit's Convent* ; wherefore, as soon as I saw him at a little Distance, I whipt into a *Hackney-Coach*, as if I had a mind to hide my self, and made it stop at the *Faubourg St. Germain*, near the *Hotel des Mousquetaires*, where I had a Cousin-German. I found him there, and yet more than I desired ; he told me that there was a Company engaged to go and dine at *Meudon*, and that it should be my Fault if I did not make one of them. I accepted his Offer ; and saw my Gentleman who had follow'd me, at a Tavern Door, shewing me to another ; however, I made as if I did not perceive it.

We got then into a Coach, and went to the *Rendezvous*, where we made a compleat Debauch ; there I observ'd the same Man who had been shown me by his Comrade ; and a little after my Return Home, I saw the same Spark

Spark come thither whom I had seen at the *Jesuits*. I was greatly tempted to have paid my Gentleman his Hire, but thought it would be more for my Advantage to take no Notice of him.

I ask'd the Porter, however, who he was ; who told me, that all he knew of him, was, that he came to our House in the Morning about Ten, and that he had spoken to my Father ; who not knowing where I was in the Afternoon, went to visit *Madame de L'Epine* : Fortunately for me, he found her working of Tapestry, with all her Daughters.

This made me yet more circumspect, I wrote Word thereof to my Mistress, to the End that she should not be surpriz'd at seeing me so long without thinking on what I had promis'd her. She acquainted me, in Answer, with the altogether extraordinary Visit which they had receiv'd from my Father, who, in all Probability, imagin'd that we were together. She recommended Secrefy to me above all Things, and to take such just Measures that we might have nothing to fear.

The rest was nothing but Assurances of a constant Love ; and a Thousand other Things that would be but Trifles to indifferent Persons, but are of the greatest Importance to People who love each other. I study'd my Conduct then all the rest of *Lent*, and the *Easter Holy-Days* ; that is to say, almost two Months ; and I succeeded so well, that

all Suspicion was at an End, and they no longer dogg'd me : Then I put the Irons in the Fire, to crown my Wishes.

I had often observ'd a Man at our House, who came thither to write for my Father's Secretary ; he seem'd to me to be for my Purpose ; his Countenance pleased me, and I was in hopes he would be serviceable : Wherefore I order'd him to be brought to me when he should come next. He came, and in order to begin to enter upon Busines, I gave him some Love-Letters to transcribe which were in Vogue at that Time, and recommended Secrefy. Next Day I went to his House, although I knew very well that he could not have finish'd what I had given him, not having promis'd it 'till two Days after : Neither was that my Intention in going thither, but only to see whether his House was convenient for my Design.

I found it was, both because it was large, and neat enough, and because it was in a very remote and unfrequented Part of the City : I even saw Bills set up, which show'd that there were Rooms to Lett ; this was just what I wanted. The Man was very much surpriz'd at seeing me ; and the Wretchedness of his Furniture having convinced me of his great Poverty, I sent for something for Breakfast, and, on Pretence of payng him for what he had already written, gave him a little Present, which gain'd him entirely over to my

my Interest, for my Familiarity had already gone a great Way towards it. This Man had a Wife, who seem'd to me to be a Woman of Intrigue, and not very scrupulous ; to her then I resolv'd to unbosom myself. I went away, however, for that Time, as I came, leaving behind me a good Opinion of my Generosity, as I found when I returned thither.

This was two Days after ; I had seen the Man at my Father's, wherefore, knowing that he would not be at Home, I went thither, on Pretence of having the Writings I had given him to transcribe. His Wife was preparing to go and look for them, but I hinder'd her, and told her, that having nothing to do, I would wait for him, and chat with her in the mean While. I sent again for somewhat to Breakfast, and obliged her to eat with me, notwithstanding that she made some Difficulty to do it ; I got rid then of my Footman, by sending him Home to tell the Man that I was waiting for him.

If this Woman had been young, or handsome, I should not have done so, but I was not afraid of being suspected, she was too old and too homely to bring my Prudence in Question. She did not want for Wit ; that was as much I desired ; I only talk'd with her at first of Things suitable to her Condition : She complain'd mightily of the Badness of the Times, and told me that her Husband and

she could hardly earn any thing, and had much ado to live.

That is to say, answer'd I laughing, that if you could find any Way, to get a good Sum without running any Risque, you would not let it slip. No, certainly, replyed she, with a certain Air, which convinced me that she spoke from the Bottom of her Heart. Are you capable of Secrefy, pursued I ? Yes, resum'd she, my Tongue never yet did me any Hurt. That is somewhat wonderful in a Woman, said I, laughing. Heark you, continued I, with a serious Air, heark you, if this be true, and you are of a Humour to do a Service to Persons who stand in need of it, I will assure you of a Present of *Fifty Louis d'Or*, as soon as the Affair is finish'd, and a Pension of twenty Crowns a Month for a very long Time ; and yet you shall neither offend God, nor Man, in what I demand ; the only Thing required is Secrefy.

At these Words, I saw a lively Joy sparkle in this Woman's Eyes, which seem'd to me sincere ; she swore to me that if it was so, I might explain myself more openly. Hereupon, I made her take an Oath that, whether she ingaged therein or not, she would never divulge what I was going to say to her ; accordingly she did bind herself by all the Oaths which I was pleased to require of her, and she has not violated them ; for my Father does

does not yet know that either she, or her Husband, were concern'd in the Intrigue.

I then declar'd to her, that I was the Person to whom she must be assisting ; that I lov'd a young Lady passionately, but that my Father would never consent that I should marry her, because she was not rich, although she was of a very good Family : That this young Lady likewise return'd my Affection, but that she had too much Love ever to grant me any Thing contrary to her Duty ; that besides her own Mother would not consent to our Marriage, for the Reasons which I have just told you, and whereof I inform'd this Woman : In short, pursued I, we want to be married, without any one's being privy to it ; she is a Minor, but I am of Age : We want a Chamber where we may meet when we please, and this Chamber must be reserv'd for us alone : We must likewise be assured of Secrefy, not only on account of my Father's Anger against me, but also because the Discovery would prove the Ruin of her, her Mother, and her whole Family. This, said I, is what we want ; now consider whether you will be assistant to us therein.

Have you thought well, answer'd this Woman, on what you are going to undertake ? As to your Marriage, it seems to me very difficult ; for what Parish Priest in *Paris*, will run the Venture of joining your Hands ? To be married at the Bishop's Court will be

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yet worse ; *M. Desprez* would be acquainted therewith that very Day. As for the Chamber, that is a Trifle, it should be left to your self to take what Precautions you please not to be surpriz'd. But how is it possible to blind the Eyes of a Mother, as to her Daughter's Conduct ? Can she have Time to come to your Rendezvous without giving any Suspicion ? And can she help all's being discover'd if she should prove with Child ? And that would certainly happen ; for a Woman that loves, does not admit the Embraces of a Man long, without carrying some Marks thereof.

You give me very surprizing Reasons, said I, and you ask me as surprizing Questions. As to our Meetings, it will depend on our Discretion to appoint the Times. There is no such Thing, reply'd she, turning aside her Head, when People are in Love. We shall have some, resum'd I, don't you trouble your self about that, since we have had Prudence enough to prevent any Person living's suspecting that we have the least extraordinary Kindness for each other. If she proves with Child, adds I, her Mother shall be inform'd thereof, there will no longer be any Danger on her Side ; and my Wife may lie in the same Chamber where we meet before : One may pretend a Journey into the Country, or to retire into a Convent. Dwell no more upon that, said she, I grant it.

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The only Difficulty that remains then, pursued I, is the Marriage : Aye, reply'd she, but that is all in all. As to the Bishop's Court, said I, nothing has pass'd between us that can come under their Cognizance ; besides this, it does not seem to me to be a creditable Method : As for the Parish Priests of *Paris*, I won't desire the Assistance of any of them, my Father would be soon inform'd thereof. After what manner then will you go about it, said she ? We must have a Priest, answer'd I, that will marry us in private ; we will not so much as ask him for a Certificate. But, says the Woman, this Priest will not have Authority to marry you, and this Marriage will be set aside. How hasty are you, resum'd I ? We don't desire our Marriage to appear Good in the Eyes of Men, since we don't even require a Certificate : The young Lady, of whom I am speaking, only desires to set her Conscience at Ease before God, by an effectual Nuptial Benediction, and for the rest, she relies upon my Fidelity.

Well then, says she, what need is there of so much Ceremony ? Deceive her ; you will find it very hard to meet with a real Priest, and you may have a Thousand who will disguise themselves in a Priest's Habit. I am not a Profligate, answered I, quite astonish'd at her Proposal ; and I will not render myself abominable in the Eyes of God, by an infamous Sacrilege. If she will be actually marry'd
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to me, I will be actually join'd in Wedlock to her, not only for my own Satisfaction, and the Ease of my Conscience, but also in order to be restrain'd within Bounds, by the Respect of a real Sacrament.

You are very much in the right, said she, to take Precautions against yourself ; this Lady must love you very well, to resign herself up to you upon such slender Security. But do you think that you shall love her long ? Yes, reply'd I, and I will answer for it. You will be the only One then of your Sex, said she, turning aside her Head ; Marriages of this Kind, that are patch'd up only for Love, are but for a Time, and I will engage, in less than two Months, you will be cloy'd with it ; or else God has made you of another Sort of Stuff then the rest of Mankind.

Don't offer to talk after this Manner to my Mistress, when you see her, said I ; if you do, you won't please me very well. Fear nothing, cry'd she laughing ; although I should say a thousand Times more to her then I have to you, it would be only so much Labour lost : Far from persuading her to believe me, I should make her my Enemy ; a Woman in Love consults only her own Heart, and her Lover.

Undoubtedly you know this by Experience said I. That may be, answer'd she laughing, I was formerly worth looking after. But, in short, added I, are you disposed to be serviceable

viceable to us? With all my Heart, said she, although I see very plainly to what Dangers I expose myself. I swear to you, in my Turn, cry'd I, an inviolable Secrefy, with the strictest Fidelity; and that whatever happens to my Wife, or me, you shall never be brought into Trouble, neither shall any one know that you have been assistant therein.

I hope so, said she, and believe that I have just pitch'd upon such a Priest in my Head as we want; I will see him this very Day, and to Morrow you shall know what we have done together; give but yourself the Trouble to pass this Way. I promis'd her I would; and here, added I, putting *Ten Louis d'Or* in her Hand, here is for the Secrefy you have vow'd to me; that shall do no Prejudice to the rest, for the Service I expect from you. This said, I went away, very well satisfy'd with having found a Woman of Intrigue, and having gain'd her over to my Interest.

I gave an account of all my Proceedings to *Mademoiselle de L'Epine*, and desir'd her to meet me, in order to be inform'd of the Answer which this Woman was to give me next Morning at Nine o'Clock, when I was to call at her House for that Purpose. Accordingly I went thither on the same Pretence of Writing, which had carry'd me thither the Time before. Her Husband was then there, she had inform'd him of every Thing, and

'twas not without the greatest Difficulty in the World, that he consented to what his Wife was to do; neither was it 'till after some Time, that I prevail'd on him to comply.

This done, his Wife told me that she had spoken to the Priest, as she had promised, but that he would not engage himself to do any Thing before he had talk'd with me, and that if I pleased, she would go and fetch him; that whatever happen'd, I might trust to his Discretion, and be sure of his Secrefy, because that, besides her having spoken to him under the Seal of Confession, she had not told the Names of the Parties concern'd, and that not knowing me, I might appear before him with the greatest Safety; that if he consented, the Thing was done at once, and if he did not, we should be but just as we were; that, as for the rest, he was a very poor Priest, such as Normandy furnishes her Neighbours with in great Numbers; but that nevertheless he was a good Clergyman, and a very honest Man. I sent then for somewhat to Breakfast; and above all, for some choice Wine, because I was willing to put the Priest into a good Humour, after which, I desired her to fetch him.

Accordingly she wenr, and brought him with her; this, Sir, said she, is the Gentleman, presenting him to me, you may now confer together about your Affairs as long as you please. We went then into an empty Chamber

Chamber on the same Floor, whereof this Woman had the Key ; this Chamber was to let, and was that which has since serv'd my Wife and me, for our private Interviews. As soon as we were left to our selves, I broke Silence : 'Tis no Purpose, Sir, said I, to repeat to you, the Motive that brings me here; the Mistress of the House must have told you. 'Tis true, Sir, answered he, she has spoken to me about somewhat ; but as Women do not usually explain themselves very well, I beg you to inform me of it yourself.

I thought the best Explanation would be to talk to him about the Money ; wherefore I only told him the whole superficially, after which, showing him what was in my Purse ; this, pursued I, is the Matter in Hand ; if you will, it is yours ; if you refuse it, so much the worse for you ; *Fifty Louis d'Or* are not to be had every Day with so much Ease, and so little Hazard. He answer'd, that before we came to that, it was proper to agree upon Matters of Fact ; after which, he enter'd upon a Sermon which was so much the more tiresome, as he was not a good Preacher. He read me a Lecture then upon the Obedience which Children owe to their Parents, show'd me the Misfortunes that had happen'd to those who had fail'd therein, and quoted to me, unseasonably enough, what he knew of sacred and profane History, all as the Curse of God upon Disobedience. In short, I

began to be heartily tired in good Earnest, when Word was brought, that we might sit down to Breakfast when we pleas'd ; upon which I took him by the Hand, and led him thither.

He was not used to a good Table, for he eat with a prodigious Appetite what was set before him, which, however, was no great Rarity, and drank but thrice, and that Wine and Water : I never saw a Man eat so heartily, and drink so little. This put him, however, in another Humour : He began his Sermon again indeed, but he took another Text, which was the Affection married People ought to bear to each other. Herein he met with better Success ; I join'd with him, and St. Paul was then quoted with great Sincerity on both Sides. I gave him to understand that I knew very well to what Marriage obliged us, and that if I did not behave myself well in that State, it would not be through Ignorance. I vow'd an eternal Love and Affection to my Spouse, and, in short, at last I prevail'd on him to comply.

He told me, that he would not only join our Hands, but even that he would give us a Certificate of Marriage, on Condition that we would both do, for our mutual Security, what he should require of us ; that we should both of us draw up a mutual Promise, sign'd and written by our Hands, before him, and of his dictating, whereby we should engage

ourselves one to another, to rectify by a new Ceremony, if need should be, whatever should be found defective in this which we were going to celebrate, and that as soon as we could do it, without exposing ourselves to the Inconveniences which obliged us to Secrecy ; that these Inconveniences should be recited in our Promises ; that we should seal these Promises by the Confession of our Sins, and by an Oath before him, to hold good and valid the Sacrament which he should confer upon us ; that these two Promises should be sign'd not only by us, but by him and the Witnesses who should see us married, after the Blessing, and before the Consummation ; that the Promise sign'd by me, should remain in her Hands ; that it should be seal'd with my Seal, and that upon the Cover I should acknowledge before Notaries, that what was therein inclosed, contain'd a Declaration of my pure and free Will. Far from being displeas'd with him for all these Precautions, I return'd him Thanks, and promis'd him to do whatever he pleas'd to desire, and to make my Spouse content thereunto likewise.

This being resolv'd on in this manner, we appointed to meet next Morning at Nine o'Clock, in the same Chamber ; and in order to engage him the more to keep his Word, I gave him Part of what was in my Purse. The rest I gave to our Landlady, to provide us Furniture, and there not being enough, took

took her Husband Home with me to supply him with more. I charg'd her to buy what she could find most genteel, and agreeable to the Eye ; and gave her a *Memorandum* of what Necessaries were wanting, that nothing might be forgot, and she discharged her Trust very well, for the next Day I found the Chamber very neatly set off.

I was at a Loss how to inform *Mademoiselle de L' Epine* of what I had done, as well as of the Appointment which I had made for her next Morning ; however, she had thought for both of us. Accordingly, just I was ready to enter our House, I met a poor Woman, who, as she was asking me Alms, show'd me a Bit of Paper, which she made Signs for me to take. I did so, and having paid her handsomely for the Carriage, read it, and found only these Words : *Be at Three o'Clock at the same Place where we met together last Time.* I did not question one Moment whence this Note came, wherefore I went exactly at that Hour to the same Church in the Suburbs.

I thought at first I had lost my Labour, because I found it shut ; but, turning my Head about, I saw her making Signs to me to go on. I waited for her then at the Corner of a narrow Street, and told her that if she pleased, I would conduct her to a Place where we might discourse as long as we pleas'd, and in Safety : She refus'd me at first, but having

inform'd her what it was, she consented. We had each of us sent away the Hackney-Coach which had brought us; wherefore I call'd another, which carried us to our Chamber; we went up to it, a Child gave us the Key, and I carried thither two Chairs.

At last, my dear Child, said I to her, we shall soon be join'd together; you are now in the Chamber which shall be Witness to the happy Conclusion of our Loves. Yes, pursued I, falling at her Feet, here 'tis that I hope to be soon able to say, that I am the happiest of Mankind, in possessing all that the Earth boasts most lovely.

Rise up, said she, with Tears in her Eyes; I desire only your Satisfaction; but much I fear that for my Part it will have a fatal Catastrophe. Alas! continued she, why has Fortune made so much Difference between us, since Heaven unites us? I foresee that, in striving to compleat your Happiness, I shall only do the contrary.

I endeavour'd to put all these fatal Presages out of her Mind; and she no more discover'd any of them to me; but it is very certain that the Forebodings of her Heart always threaten'd her with the Misfortune that has besallen her, and with the melancholy Condition to which her Loss has reduced me for the Rest of my Days. At these Words, the Tears came afresh into the Eyes of *Defrez*, at last he resum'd his Discourse.

I inform'd her of all that I had done ; and telling her that I had given my Word for her being there, begg'd her to tell me if I had gone beyond her Orders, and if she was vex'd that I had ingaged her so far. She answer'd, that she had but one Word, that she would do just what I pleased, and that she would not fail to meet me next Day at the Place where we then were. She farther said, that the Letter I had thrown into her Window the Night before, had made her so impatient, that she was resolv'd to speak to me that very Day ; that to that End, she got the Note written which had been given me, and that she gave to a poor Woman, with Orders to deliver it into my own Hands, promising her, that besides what I should give her, she would pay her well for the Carriage, and that she would give her as much more the next Day, if she did not fail, which she should know by the Answer.

I inquired then how she would do for the future, to meet me at the Times when I should appoint her. Don't perplex yourself about that, said she, I do my own Busines, and will not miss one Appointment, as soon as you seem to desire it. Do you hope, resum'd I, that your Mother will leave you entirely to your own Discretion ? Yes, I do hope it, reply'd she, and since you will know how, I must tell you. I will not have her apprized of what we are about at present ; but, as soon as

it

it is a done Thing, she shall be acquainted therewith. You are at Age, there is nothing to be fear'd on that Side ; she would prevent our concluding it, because she would not run the Hazard of having any Difference with *M. Desprez*, whom she fears, and whom she don't love ; she is still shock'd at his Compliment, which she will never forget. But when we have concluded our Affairs without her, she will be the first to lend us her Assistance to conceal our Marriage, for fear that if it should be discover'd, your Father should accuse her of having contrived it, and should revenge himself upon her for the Vexation it would cause him.

I agree to what you say, answer'd I, but will she think our Marriage Good ; will she approve of the Formalities and Ceremonies ? If our Marriage is not Good, said she, I will not consent neither. But did not you tell me, added she, that the Priest who is concern'd, takes all manner of Precautions ? Yes, reply'd I. Well, resum'd she, that is what makes me say that our Marriage being valid, it will be to no Purpose to conceal it from her. But did not you promise me, said I, that you would bestow yourself on me, provided that your Conscience might be at Ease. I promise it you again, answered she ; if there was no Body but myself whom this Marriage was to satisfy, I should not be so very exact ; and, on the contrary, if my Mother can be satisfied

fy'd also, I promise you her Interest entirely : The Marriage would be Good, with relation to me, provided that he who gives us the Nuptial Blessing, is actually a Priest ; I ask no more for my Part : But, as for my Mother, 'tis quite another Thing ; you know what I mean ; I resign myself up entirely to you ; I am contented with being your Spouse before God, and I leave you at Liberty to make me pass for a Wretch before Men.

No, answer'd I, falling a second Time at her Knees, you shall not be deceiv'd, I will not abuse your Confidence, you shall be my Wife both before God and Man ; Death alone shall tear us from each other. I hope so, said she, I have too good an Opinion of you, to fear that you would ever abandon me ; or if you should do it, I should, at least, have the melancholy Pleasure to see you break through the solemn Tyes of a Sacra-
ment, which the most reprobate respect ; and at the worst, if I seem Criminal in the Eyes of Men, I shall believe myself innocent before God.

In the mean while, the Mistress of the House return'd from making her Purchases, being follow'd by Porters loaden with the Things she had been buying for us, whereof we did not seem to take any Notice. She saw my Mistress, extoll'd her Beauty, and launch'd out into Commendations of her Charms, like a Woman who was a good Judge

Judge in such Affairs. We then had a little Collation there, which done, she went away, after having promised to meet me the next Morning at Nine, in the same Place : I follow'd soon after, having first given Orders for a Breakfast in Form.

We came to the Rendezvous almost at the same Instant, where she found her Chamber very neat, and in very good Order for such a little Time ; and indeed every Thing was well chosen. After that we had examin'd every Thing, I desir'd our Landlady to go and fetch the Priest for whom we waited. Whilst she went thither, I remain'd alone with *Mademoiselle de L' Epine*, who fell again into her Apprehensions : I observ'd it by a melancholy Air, which overspread her Face, and the Tears which stood in her Eyes.

Have you still any Thing upon your Spirits which afflicts you, my dear Child, said I ? In God's Name take Part in my Joy ! I shall not relish it entirely if you don't share it with me. I do partake of it as much as I can, answer'd she, but I can't help thinking of the Future, and I confess that terrifies me. But let not that give you any Trouble, added she, for it is only for you that I fear : As to myself, I take no Thought about what relates to me, and provided you are happy, if it be true, as you say, that you place your

Happiness in the Enjoyment of me, I shall never repent of all that I have done for you.

I shall never be happy, reply'd I, unless you be happy likewise, be assured thereof; and although my whole Happiness is in Effect wrapt up in your Person, and your Possession, I would willingly renounce both, if I fear'd that it would cost you the least Sorrow in the End. I am very well satisfy'd, said she, that those are your real Sentiments at present; I am even sure, added she, languishingly, at least I think I ought to be so, that my Misfortunes will never proceed from you; neither will you contribute to them, but I cannot fancy to myself that ever I was born to be happy. Nevertheless, whatever Misfortune befalls me, I will never accuse you thereof, I will only accuse the Inclination that hurries me away, and the Planet that reign'd at my Nativity. She could not make Reflections of this Nature, without being bath'd in Tears; and altho' I did all I could to dispel them, I could not help being mov'd therewith myself.

At last the Priest, for whom we waited, came, with whom we staid alone above an Hour; and as he saw a Lady who was not only perfectly beautiful, as I had told him, but who, contrary to his Expectation, was very well dress'd, and whose Presence inspired Respect, he said nothing but what was very good Sense, and extremely civil. He made

us a little Exhortation, that was very just, on the Engagement into which we were going to enter; and show'd us that it was to us the Scripture spoke, when it says, *That a Man must leave all for his Wife; and a Woman, reciprocally, for her Husband;* that we were obliged to follow those Words literally, much more then other married People. In effect, said he, those whose Marriages are made by their Parents, have some Reason to complain of them, when they are not so well satisfy'd with their State as they hoped to be: They may say to them, 'tis you who have chosen me a Wife, or a Husband; you are responsible to me, for his, or her ill Humour and Conduct; if I had chosen for myself, I should have been better, and I should live contented; But you would have me refer myself to your Choice, and my Compliance with your Commands, costs me the whole Peace of my Life; and will, perhaps, cost me my eternal Happiness, through the Sins which I am made to commit, by the Chain which binds me to a Person whom I cannot love, and whose Temper, which is quite contrary to mine, makes our Family a lively Picture of Hell, by reason of the perpetual Discord that reigns there.

You are not in this Case, added he, addressing himself to us; you choose each other; you must resolve never to leave each other. You, Sir, said he, to me, take this

Lady

Lady who has not a Fortune equal to yours ; it is but a worldly Consideration which engages you to Secrecy ; these Riches are nothing in the Eye of God, but the Sacrament will be always a Sacrement ; it would not be her you would deceive, it would be yourself ; you would not mock God with Impunity : Wherefore you must resolve to run with her all the Hazards into which you draw her, and never abandon her let what will happen.

As for you, Madam, pursued he, speaking to her, you give yourself to this Gentleman ; you know to what a Woman of Honour is obliged ; but, besides Fidelity and Obedience, you are obliged to a thousand other Duties, to which others are not bound. The Love which this Gentleman has for you, induces him to espouse you ; consider that his Love is nothing, and that it will soon vanish, unless it be fortify'd on your Part, by a Conduct entirely submissive, prudent, and virtuous ; as also by an absolute devoting yourself to his Will.

You are so much the more obliged to cherish this Love, and to maintain yourself in his Esteem, because the least false Step in your Behaviour, and the least Cause of Complaint that you may chance to give him, would seem in his Eyes irreparable, and unpardonable Crimes. He may think himself justified, in despising at the same Time both your Person and the Sacrament, wherein, perhaps, he would

would be supported by the Laws of Mankind : In short, he argued very justly, and made no Ceremony of Dining with us, it being too late for Breakfast. During our Repast then we were very merry, and our Land-lady, whose Husband was abroad, waited upon us at Table.

After Dinner, he made each of us write a Promise of Marriage, or rather a very long Recognizance, which is certainly well-drawn up, and would, I believe, have been allow'd Good in Law : They were entirely the same, only the Names were transposed. We then vow'd an inviolable Secrefy, after which, I ask'd him when he would give us his Blessing. He told us, that he would not give it us 'till we had both been at Mass, and at Confession to him, which done, it should be when we pleased. There was no Words to be made about it, for it was stipulated in the Promise of Marriage. Hereupon we appointed a Day to confess, I the next Morning, and she the *Sunday* following, and the *Monday* after, at Six in the Morning, to join our Hands : He promis'd to wait for us in his Church, and took his Leave.

Mademoiselle de L'Epine and I, being then left to ourselves, she told me that this Priest seem'd to her a Person of good Sense, and a very honest Man, wherefore she believ'd that her Mother would have nothing to alledge against what we were doing. In Effect, only

only that the Laws of the Prince were not observed, by the publishing the Banes, and the registering it in the Parish-Books ; the rest was agreeable to the usual Forms, and it could not be said that our Marriage was not valid.

As to my Wife, she seem'd to be very well satisfy'd in her Mind, and having look'd over the Chamber from one End to the other, was highly pleas'd therewith. I told her then I had promis'd *Fifty Louis d' Or* to our Land-lady, and at the same Time obliging her to take a Purse of Money, I bid her pay her Share.

Hereupon she call'd her, and making her take away what was left at Dinner, I am very well pleas'd, said she, with the Furniture you have bought, and thank you for your Care : *M. Desprez* has promised you *Fifty Louis d' Or*, that is five and twenty each, here is my Share. The Woman having taken them with some little Difficulty ; I foresee, pursued *Mademoiselle de L' Epine*, that we shall dine here on *Monday*, wherefore I will defray the Charges ; here, take this Money, and entertain us well, it is to be my Wedding-Day, and I must be merry : The Woman promis'd nothing should be wanting, and went away.

Being again left alone with her, I press'd her in vain to anticipate my Happiness ; No, no, said she, you shall not triumph in that manner

manner over my Weakness : As I saw therefore that it would be only losing my Time, I did not insist upon it any longer. I ask'd her then how she would do to meet me at our Rendezvous, especially on *Monday*, when she would be abroad perhaps the whole Day. I will go, said she, on *Sunday* to Church with one of my Sisters, and from thence I will make a Visit to a Lady, who is a very good Friend both of my Mother's and mine, and will beg her to send for me that very Evening to take the Air some where out of *Paris*. I know very well that she will not go ; but nevertheless that will be a Pretence for me to go out on *Monday* Morning, and I will tell that Lady that I have a mind to go to Mount *Valerian*, but that I could not obtain Leave.

The Lady, I am sure, will do me this Service ; at the worst, I shall come off with being chid my by Mother, as I have been a Thousand Times about Trifles, and this Occasion richly deserves that I should run the Venture once, tho' it were on Purpose. Be it as it will, continued she, I won't fail to be there ; this said, we embraced, and she went Home.

I sent then for a Lock-Smith, whom I order'd to make a Lock with three Keys ; to the End that my Wife, my Landlady, and myself, might have each of us one ; and as it was early, and our Landlord was return'd, I staid some Time with him. I pro-

mised to serve him, and to procure him a settled Employment, which I have done, and by God's Help, will take Care of his Fortune as long as I live. Hereupon, his Wife, being sensibly affected with Gratitude, and with the Beauty of my future Spouse, was never weary of extolling her Charms. She conceived such a Love for her, that there is no Kind of Service which she has not render'd her ; and the poor Woman, at this Instant, is almost my only Comfort, so much was she afflicted at my Wife's melancholy Death ; and I dare answer that her Sorrow is as Sincere as mine. The Tears came again into *Desprez*'s Eyes at this Part of the Story.

As I was going out of this House, continued he, on *Sunday* in the Afternoon, I met the Priest who was to marry us the next Morning ; and as he was going to take a Walk, we went together.

Our Steps conducted us insensibly to the *Capuchin's* Garden, in the Street *Saint Honore*, a Place very distant from my Father's. We sat down there upon a Bench, and a *Capuchin* of the Priest's Acquaintance, came and sat down by us ; as I did not know them well enough to discourse with them upon any Subject but Religion, we handled that Point very fully.

By the greatest Chance in the World, my Father happen'd to be then in this Garden, and seeing me between a Priest and a Friar, had the

the Curiosity to dive into what we were talking about ; wherefore he came near us, and listen'd. We were upon such a Topick that I could not have chosen better ; it was upon the Prodigal Son. The Advantage of a sincere Conversion, and a real Return to God, after a disorderly Life, was treated upon throughly ; and indeed the Air wherewith this Priest and this Friar spoke, inspired me with Devotion ; insomuch that although they said nothing but what I had heard a Thousand Times, it moved me so far as to fetch Tears into my Eyes ; and as I turn'd about to wipe them, to hide my Disorder, I perceiv'd my Father just behind me, with only an Arbour between us.

I leave you to judge how great was my Astonishment ; it was with Difficulty that I recover'd from the Confusion into which his Presence had thrown me. He observ'd it ; the Harm is not very great, Sir, said he, you might employ your Time much worse ; I did not know that you was such a religious Man. I return'd him not the least Answer, but, making him a very low Bow, went out with the Priest who had carried me thither.

On my going Home at Night, I was inform'd that he was in a terrible Passion with me, that he had already ask'd twice or thrice whether I was not come in, and that he would not go to Supper without me. Hereupon, I thought myself lost, and imagin'd

I 2 that

that he had heard something of my Marriage, although I did not remember that I had mention'd it to the Priest whilst in that Garden. This made me ready to despair, but I was deceiv'd, 'twas quite the contrary.

I never knew what the Friars had done to him, especially the *Mendicants*, but he hated them like the Plague. As soon as I was gone out of the Convent, he ask'd the Porter if I came thither sometimes, who answer'd Yes, as was true, because *Gallouin*, your Friend and mine, who had turn'd *Capuchin*, had staid some Time in that Monastery, whither I went frequently to visit him. Hereupon, this Answer, together with what he had heard me say to the Two Clergymen, and my having turn'd away my Footman about a Week before, without any Reason, and refusing to take another that depended upon him, persuaded him that I had a Design to turn Friar, and had only dismiss'd this Fellow, and went out always on Foot, to the End that I might not be dogg'd: He was in the right in that, at the Bottom, but was mightily mistaken in the Inference he drew from thence.

He had already been railing against the Convent, but 'twas much worse when he saw me. Faith, Sir, said he, you are preparing me a fine Recompence! Are you afraid of not having enough to live upon, or of not being able to get it, that you have a mind to bind

bind yourself with a Vow to be a Beggar. If I thought, added he, in a violent Fury, that you had a Soul so mean, to throw your self into a Convent, I would wring your Neck off, adzooks, this Instant, or else I would put you where you should be as safely confin'd as there at the least. O the Devil ! pursued he, miserable Wretches, made up of Dirt and Sordidness ; you shall be none of them, Faith, whilst I live, I give you my Word of it, I'll take Care of that.

I was not sorry to see that his Fears were no better grounded, wherefore I contented myself with swearing to him that I would not dispose of myself that Way, without his Consent. But he still continued his Invectives against the Friars, about which I did not much trouble myself, having not the least mind to be one. During all Supper-Time, he talk'd of nothing else, and lash'd them terribly ; I know not what they have done to provoke his Hatred, but far from bestowing any Charity upon them, he rail'd at them wherever he met them. Nevertheless he is very charitable ; but none but Old Men, Foundlings, and Cripples, who are all incapable of getting their Living, reap the Benefit of his Liberality. This puts me in Mind of a Passage that I saw, and which I must tell you.

He was standing one Day before his Door, giving Orders for the mending a leaden Pipe, which serv'd the House with Water ; and whilst

whilst he was seeing the Paviors and Plummers Work, there came a Sort of Hermit, and ask'd his Alms. Instead of making him any other Answer, he show'd him the Workmen ; those Men there labour, said he, they earn their Living, they are no Charge to the Publick ; and if, continued he, the senseless Devotion of Christians did not maintain so many useless Mouths, we should not see so many idle Vagabonds in *France*. Do you understand me ? pursued he, looking at him ; upon which the Friar confounded, turn'd his Back upon him.

To return from whence I have digress'd ; he ridicul'd the *Walleeteers* (for so he call'd them) so thoroughly, that all the Servants thought he was perfectly satisfy'd of my Intentions, that I absolutely design'd to turn *Capuchin*, and that it was because it should not be known that I had dismiss'd my Footman : This is the Foundation of the Report that was spread in the Neighbourhood. He sent then again for this Footman, and order'd him before me, to leave me no more than my Shadow, and to inform him of all my Actions ; and if thou failest me, said he, look me well in the Face, thou shalt see a Man that will have thee hang'd : Remember what I promise thee, I am one of my Word, and shall know if thou obligest me.

There was no need of so many Words, I understood very well that I should be follow'd next Morning ; wherefore I prevented it,

it, by going out before Day, through the Garden ; and went so many By-ways, before I directed my Steps towards the Church appointed, that a Man must have been worse than the Devil, not to have lost Sight of me.

I got thither exactly at the Hour appointed, and they were waiting for me in a little Chapel, which was shut as soon as I enter'd therein ; and there not being any one whatsoever who was not in the Secret, we were soon married. The Door was open'd afterwards, and the Priest said Mass publickly, after which, my Wife went out first, and the others follow'd.

I staid behind with the Priest, whom I rewarded very handsomely ; I pray'd him likewise to come and eat a Bit with us ; he came accordingly, and my Wife also made him a very handsome Present. Before we broke our Fast, he took our Promises of Marriage, which he had kept five Days, and making us date and sign them, he witness'd them, and had them witness'd by four Persons, who were in the Secret, *viz.* our Landlord, two Merchants that liv'd in the Neighbourhood, and a Field-Officer, all his Friends, for whom he had answer'd. He then made us, in their Presence, take the Oath he had required to hold it good and valid, after which, he gave me the Promise written by my Wife.

This done, he took me with him to his Lodging, whither he sent for two Notaries,
before

before whom, I wrapt up in a Cover that which I had written, and sealing it with my Seal, acknowledged that what was therein inclosed, was written and sign'd by me, and contain'd my pure and free Will, in Case of Death, or any other Accident ; and, that I desired it might be kept secret, for Reasons that were explain'd therein. Hereupon, these Notaries imagin'd that it was a Will which I intrusted in the Hands of this Priest.

We then return'd home, where giving this Parcel to my Spouse ; here, Madam, said he, is all that can be done, humanly speaking, to contribute to your Safety before Men ; as to God, set your Conscience at Rest, your Marriage is good : Keep well this Parcel, and don't unseal it 'till it is a proper Time ; and when you do break it open, take all the Precautions to which you shall be advis'd, by Men learned in the Law ; but above all, by such as are upright, and your Friends. I believe, that after this, there was nothing to be said against its Validity ; and that she might, without any Scruples, look upon me as her Husband : Accordingly she made none, and I had all the Reason in the World to be satisfy'd with her.

She had come in a Night-Gown, with only a quilted Wastcoat, for which Negligence I thought myself obliged to her ; for, although it was above a Fortnight after *Easter*, the Weather was not warm enough to go thin cloath'd : Wherefore, whilst the Priest and I had

had been gone, she had dress'd herself, insomuch that at our Return, we found her set out to the best Advantage, and in the Posture of a Woman that is desirous of pleasing.

She had put on a Gown of a blue Brocade, strip'd with Silver, a Waistcoat of the same Colour, which, without being uneasy, discover'd the Beauty of her Shape ; a white Sattin Under-Petticoat, with Silver Lace and Fringe ; and a Petticoat of the same as the Gown, with Silver open Lace, and a tufted Network of the same ; a Pair of blue *Morocco* Shoes, with a Silver Braid, and Diamond Buckles, and a Pair of black Silk Stockings, with a Silver Seam and Clocks ; her Hair finely dress'd, very fine Linnen, and a rich Pearl Necklace : In short, she was in a Way to charm any one.

We din'd very well with our Witnesses ; but although the Entertainment was very handsome and good, I thought it very tedious. The Cloth was soon taken away, and the Company withdrew, leaving her and me alone together about Two o'Clock.

Here *Desprez* again begun his Sighs and Lamentations ; those happy Moments are over with me, cry'd he out, I shall see her no more, she is dead, with a thousand other Things of the same Nature ; after which, he went on in a more sedate Tone. I staid then with her till Seven in the Evening, nor were we disturb'd by any one, but to take a little Refreshment,

freshment, when we eat the Remainder of our Dinner with more Appetite, than when it was first brought on Table : We then appointed another Meeting two Days after, because she could not be there sooner.

I gave her one of the three Keys which I had caused to be made, and left upon the Table, Paper, Pens and Ink to write ; having agreed that always when we came, which should be as often as possible on both Sides, we would make fresh Appointments, if we could not meet there at the same Hour, or if one of us could not wait for the other, and that we would thus inform each other how Affairs went. This done, I fully satisfy'd our Land-lady, who promis'd to take Care of our little Matters, and giving her another Key of the Chamber, left the House the most contented Man in the World.

My only Fear now was the being discover'd by my Footman ; wherefore in order to put him to a Non-plus, I caused a Room to be hired in a House adjoining, that belong'd to the same Head-Landlord, and by his Consent had a Communication open'd between the two Chambers, insomuch that my Wife did not enter by the same Door as I did. Thus my Servant, who always staid above whilst I was there, was far from seeing her come in, or go out ; and when I knew she was in her Room, whereof I was inform'd by a little Bell which she rang, I sent him out

out of the way for a thousand Trifles, which he was to fetch from different Places, and would take up some Time. When she was not there, my Landlady went to fetch me the Letters she had left, and I answer'd them in a Minute; thus I never went into that Room when my Footman was present, nor when my Wife was not there, and yet I went every Day to that House, on Pretence of new Writings.

I have already told you, that my Wife was ready at Invention, whereof I will give you an Instance. We had been together one Day, and had spent the whole Afternoon with each other, but was not to meet one another again in three Days, not thinking we should have any Opportunity sooner. Contrary to her Expectation, she had one the next Day, whereof she was obliged to give me Notice that Moment; I was then walking upon the Ramparts with two of my Friends, and she seeing me from her Window, wrote these few Words:

I am going to our Chamber, where I will wait for you.

She came then where we were walking, and taking her Time when we were before her, call'd me aloud by my Name, and upon my turning, and seeing her; *Here, Sir,* said she, with a sprightly Air, *is a Note which is just fallen out of your Pocket; your Mistress is very much to be pittied, for having such a careless Lover:* This said, she gave me her Note without stopping.

They who were with me, knew her very well; but as I never visited her publickly, no Soul living suspected our Correspondence; wherefore they rallied me upon my Carelessness. I read the Note then, and tore it with so much Indifference, that they were fully perswaded it affected me but little: I staid with them afterwards some Time longer, and at last we parted to go about our Affairs, without my talking first of having any Busines. Being released, I went to her, and told her that I admired her Presence of Mind, but that one must act with Circumspection in Attempts of this Nature, and not run the Hazard often.

I saw her one Day at Mass, and she seem'd to me sick, which put me in Pain; I went in the Afternoon to our Chamber, without thinking to find her there, but she was there, and asleep. Our Landlady hearing me, made me a Sign not to make a Noise, and at the same Time gave me to know that she wanted to speak with me, for I was going directly into the Chamber, because my Footman was not with me.

She told me then, that my Wife had been there about an Hour, and had said that she had such a violent Head-ach, that she had not been able to close her Eyes all Night; that she had thrown h rself upon the Bed as soon as she came in, no thinking that I should be there that Day, or at least so soon, and that she

she had fallen asleep. I beg you, adds this Woman, to let her rest, she has need of it, go and take a Walk, and come again. Hereupon I went out, and when I returned, which was above three Hours after, she was not there, having been gone but a Moment before, but I found upon the Table a Letter which she had left, and which was to this Effect.

L E T T E R.

I Did not think that a Husband ought to have minded his Wife's Slumbers, especially in a Place where he is very sure that it was not the Desire of Sleeping that brought her. I thank you for your Discretion; however, don't apprehend any ill Consequences from my Sickness, I am in good Health, and very glad to assure you thereof; for in all Appearance, you was afraid that I should have communicated my Distemper to you. I have lost my Labour, but I should not have lost it three Months ago; the Love you had then for me, was not so respectful, but it is now grown so. Depend upon it, however, that I will not lose what I came to seek, and that I will return to Morrow at the same Hour, when I expect that you should discharge what you owe me for to Day, and what you will then likewise owe me for to Morrow.

I thought

I thought this Note very full of Wit, and the Complaint she made me of the Coldness of my Love, seem'd to me very tender and new. Wherefore I wrote her another in the same Style to rally her, as she had a mind to put a Jest upon me.

A N S W E R.

I Did not disturb your Slumbers, because I thought you had need of Rest, and that your Illness was not feigned; now you may sleep at your Ease, if you please, for my Heart tells me that I shall be sick when you read these Lines. I am afraid of catching your Distemper, and will not expose you to the Danger of mine; you have so often refused, or receiv'd, against your Will, what I ow'd you, that I am satisfy'd the Payment does not make you at all uneasy; wherefore don't be displeased if I defer it for three Months: My Love will recover, in that Time, the same Ardour which it has lost, during an equal Space of Time, and will no longer be so respectful.

Having clos'd this, I inform'd our Landlady of the Contents both of the Letter, and the Answer; after which, I told her what to do for her Part: The next Day I went thither before her, and hid myself when I heard her coming. Our Landlady then acquainted

quainted her that I went away angry the Evening before, after having left the Note that was upon the Table. O ! my God, cry'd she, after having read it, is it possible that he should have fallen into a Passion, about a Jest only which I would have put upon him. I saw the Tears come into her Eyes, and would not give her any more Pain, wherefore I ran to embrace her, and our Peace was soon made.

I ask'd her then, if she was willing that we should go and take a Walk together ; she consented, and it was the only Time that ever we were abroad in Company together. We were sure that we should meet no Acquaintance the Way we went, and were returning back again from our Walk, when the Devil, who intermeddles with every Thing, expos'd us to a very extraordinary Adventure.

It was one of the finest Days in the Year, and all the Fields were cover'd with Corn ready for the Sickle ; a little Rain that had fallen in the Morning, had laid the Dust, and render'd the Earth firm : The Sun was clou'd over, and a gentle Breeze moderated the sultry Heat of the Weather. I have already told you that my Wife was bold and resolute in the Execution of what she once undertook, as you will see by the Sequel.

The Height of the Rye, which reach'd up to our Heads, and even above them, with the Loneliness of the Place where we were,
and

and the Love I had for her, kindled in me such Desires as I could not master : Wherefore, I pray'd her to step into the Corn, she made a thousand Difficulties about it, but having told her that I absolutely insisted upon it, she went in. This was not the only Time which convinced me that she studied only my Satisfaction, whatever Reluctance she had otherwise to complying with my Desires. In effect, it seem'd as if she had foreseen what would happen to us : We enter'd the Corn then, thinking we had not been perceiv'd by any one.

I was giving myself over to my Raptures, when I found myself seiz'd on by a Man, whose Arms were long enough to give us some Trouble, but not to keep us down, although he flew upon us with the utmost Fury ; whereupon my Wife gave a great Shriek, and disengaged herself from my Arms. As the Surprize had not depriv'd me of a Presence of Mind, I had seiz'd in my Turn upon the Man, who began to fear the Effects of his Sauciness, having met with a Resistance which he did not expect. I held him then very fast, draw my Sword, said I, to my Wife, stab, kill the Rascal, let him be who he will, without Hesitation.

Accordingly she was going to do so without any Ceremony, when this Man, who could not get loose from my Hands, which held both his Arms, ask'd her Pardon, and begg'd his Life.

At

At these Words, I bid my Wife hold the Point to his Throat, and run him through, if he made the least Offer to rise : She did so, and I let go his Arms, and got up, and recovering myself from my Disorder, took my Sword from my Wife, and bid her go to our Chamber ; and as for thee, thou art dead, said I to this Man, whom I found to be a Country Clown.

The Wretch being surprized to the last Degree, did just what I pleas'd ; he lay absolutely at my Discretion ; I kept him upon the Ground, with my Sword to his Breast, without his daring to stir, or cry out : It is certain that he had done either the one or the other, he would have been a dead Man. After a considerable Time, when I imagin'd that *Madame Desprez* might be far enough, neither to fear any Insult or Scandal, I made him get up : Come with me, said I, and I will pay thee for the Damage done thy Rye. He thought, as he told me, to have found only some Rabble, but our Air show'd him he was deceiv'd.

He follow'd me then where I pleased to lead him, which was another Way then that my Wife had taken, and entering into one of the Suburbs, as a Payment for his Rye, I broke my Cane about his Shoulders. After this, two Footmen who knew me, and who happen'd to be there waiting for their Masters, who were in a Garden hard by, drubb'd him

like a Dog shut into a House, and cured him, as I believe, of ever having a mind to disturb a Man at such a Time.

I had seen, at a Distance, a Woman dress'd in Black, that was going the same Way ; I sacrificed her to my Wife's Safety. I asked these Footmen then if they had not seen a Woman in Mourning pass by ; they answer'd yes, but that she was a good Way off, because she walk'd very fast. They thought it was with her that I had been, which was my Design ; wherefore I did not undeceive them, but contented myself with desiring them not to speak of this Adventure, and paid them for their Trouble.

My Father heard of it that very Night, and had the Curiosity to ask these Footmen if they had seen the Woman ; they answer'd that she was in Mourning, about eight and twenty, and very pretty, but that they did not know her : Thus was all Suspicion removed, and the more, because they knew my Wife as well as they did me. He rallied me upon it therefore at Night at Supper, but far from being angry, he only made a Jest of it.

I had rather have you there then in a Convent, said he, only take Care with whom you meddle. If, added he, the Fair One with whom you was surprized to Day, is but a Woman of the Town, you was in the right to make use only of a Cane or a Cudgel ; but

but if she was a married Woman, a Widow, or a single Woman, whose Reputation is to be taken Care of, you are in the wrong ; you should have left the Rogue dead upon the Spot ; for she will be a ruin'd Woman, if he should meet with her again, and should chance to know her.

He said no more to me, and he was in the right in what he had said ; but I was very sure he would not have known her again if he should have seen her. After having had him well thrash'd, I went to meet my Wife again, being vex'd to the last Degree, at having exposed her so unseasonably, and that she had been seen by any one but myself in that Condition, especially by a Rascal of a Country-Clown. I found her, as I expected, in Tears, but, in order to comfort her, I did not fret for Company ; on the contrary, I turn'd it all into a Jest, and telling her in what Coin I had paid the curious Spark, we parted good Friends.

We spent the whole Spring, the Summer, and the Winter, in unconceivable Pleasures ; I was the happiest of Mankind, and my Wife seem'd every Day more beautiful, and more amiable to me then ever. Never did two Persons understand one another better ; when we met, we saluted each other civilly, but with Indifference ; and this was managed so well, that her own Mother was deceived by it, and complain'd that I neglected them en-

tirely : Wherefore she desired one of those Gentlemen that still used her House, to visit me, and know of me if I had any Reason to complain of her.

This Step was self-interested, for she still stood in need of my Interposition, with that Friend whom I before-mentioned to you. My Wife inform'd me thereof, and we consulted together what Answer I should give, which was, that I was always entirely devoted to *Mademoiselle de L' Epine*, and that I would be ready to serve her in any thing, and any where ; but that I begg'd to be excused from coming to her House, on account of my Father's absolute Prohibition ; and more for her Sake than my own, since I should have been there at all Hours; if I had been absolute Master of myself.

We met then at the *Palais* ; I conducted her every where, where she had any need of my Assistance, and even offer'd her my Purse, but never spoke to her Daughter, but to enquire after the Society. I had had the Precaution to ask my Father, whether I should offend him, in doing that Gentlewoman some Services that were in my Power ; he answer'd me, that on the contrary, he should be very well pleased therewith, and that he even desired I would, not having opposed my frequent Visits, but on account of the Consequences that might ensue.

It

It was impossible to believe that two Persons, who lived publickly, as she and I lived, were Husband and Wife ; and 'twas certainly something very singular to pass by one another, as that often happen'd, and to salute each other as we did the rest of the World, a Quarter of an Hour before, or after, Embraces full of the utmost Tenderness.

She became with Child towards the End of September, and told me of it, at which I was not sorry ; it was natural : There was nothing more easy than to conceal it, and that did not prevent our seeing each other. But as all the Prudence of Man cannot prevent a thousand Accidents which may happen, I oblig'd her to take some Money, which I would have given her a hundred times, and which she had as often refused. The whole Winter pass'd on in the same manner, but her great Belly began to appear so plainly, that there was no Probability of hiding it any longer.

It was necessary to think of discovering herself to her Mother ; she had fancy'd that she could do it with a great deal of Ease ; but when she was just upon the Point of putting it in Execution, she found a thousand Difficulties therein, which she either had not foreseen, or which she had hoped that she cou'd have easily overcome.

She was afraid that her Mother would not be appeased, for her being married without her

her Knowledge ; especially to me, because she was apprehensive of my Father's Anger and Vengeance : She was afraid that our Marriage would seem to her an actual Debauchery. I blam'd her Fears, and endeavour'd to dispel them to the utmost of my Power ; but after all, said I, 'tis a done Thing, whereof I don't repent : Do you repent of it ? No, answered she ; I don't repent thereof ; I should do it, if was to be done again.

Then I propos'd an Expedient to her, and would to God she had comply'd therewith ; she would still be mine. Well, said I, don't return to your Mother's, stay here, and don't stir out ; no Body whatsoever will come here to look for you, and you may Lye-in in private : Write to your Mother that you have retired to a Convent, let her believe it, or not, you will be never the worse, whatever happens : If she should not believe it, it will be for her Honour to make others believe it. In the mean while, I shall see you every Day, and when there is a Time for you to discover yourself with Safety, you shall do it ; but do not expose yourself to appear any more before the People that know you ; especially in the Neighbourhood, where they will soon discover the unusual Burliness of your Shape.

You are in the right, answer'd she, they will so ; but I can by no means avoid informing my Mother, and I beg you to consent to it.

But

But how will you go about it, reply'd I ? That is what must be thought on, said she ; but before I mention it to her, I have a mind to speak to — — That is what I absolutely forbid you, cry'd I, interrupting her, I will not have any one but her know upon what Terms we are together ; neither should she know any Thing of it, if I might rule.

Well then, said she, embracing me, will you do one Thing for me ? Do you still love me ? I love you better then ever, answered I, and 'tis because I love you, that I won't expose you to any vexatious Accident. As to what you desire of me, assure yourself, that provided I can do it without injuring you, I will consent to it with all my Heart. What is it ? 'Tis to send for her, said she, whilst you are here, and to declare to her, whilst we are both together, how it is with us. You must let her say whatever her Passion puts in her Mouth ; let her Anger be as violent as it will, you must bear with it : After that, we shall make her tractable, by the Dint of Reason, and by our Submissions.

I consent with ail my Heart, reply'd I, and will even throw myself at her Feet, if 'tis necessary : I will suffer any thing, provided she does not lay Hands upon you, and her Outrages go no farther than Words, for otherwise I shall not be pleased with them. Wou'd to God, said she laughing, that I could come off for two or three Boxes on the

the Ear ; but you will be by, and it will be in your Power to prevent its coming to that : She will hear Reason, and seeing that I am not in a Condition to go back from what I have done, she must consent, or at least she must keep it secret.

Are you absolutely resolved upon your Mother's knowing it, answered I ; 'tis against my Will, and I am very much afraid that you will repent it ; but, in short, you will have it so, and that is a sufficient Reason for me to consent to it too. Remember, however, pursued I, that you would do much better to continue here, and not return Home any more ; neither would I have you inform her where you are, but send her Word you are in a Convent : I very much fear the Consequence of taking this Step, and if, in my Turn, I were to be ruled by my Forebodings, I should follow my own Advice.

Suppose yourself in my Place, said she, she is my Mother, and tho' she should make others believe that I am in a Convent, with what Suspicions will she not be tortur'd ? What will she think ? In the Name of God, pursued she, embracing me, grant me this Satisfaction. Be it so, answered I, shrugging up my Shoulders, I will oppose it no longer ; you need only appoint your own Time, I will be here without fail. We must both be here before she comes, said she, because we must send for her. Well, reply'd I, tell me, when

when you would have it done: To-morrow Morning, answered she; my Mother has no Business abroad, and will stay at Home; wherefore I will send her a Letter and a Coach, and we will wait for her here.

We met next Morning at the Place appointed; I found her determin'd at all Events, and she had already written these Lines.

L E T T E R.

*A*N Affair that has happen'd to me, and that requires your Presence, dear Mother, makes me take Pen in Hand to beg you to get into the Coach which I send you, and come alone where that will carry you. You will there know what is the Matter, which I cannot explain to you but in Person, and in the Presence of those with whom I now am; from your

Most dutiful Daughter and humble Servant,

MARY-MAGDALEN DE L'EPINE.

She sent this Note with the same Coach that had brought her, giving Orders to the Coachman to stop at the House if she came alone, and at a Church, if she had Company with her. I should have gone thither for her, but there was no Occasion, for she came alone.

M

Whilst

Whilst the Coach was gone for her, we resolv'd after what manner she should be received, and it was agreed that I should appear before her first, because I did not think it proper to expose my Wife, in the Condition wherein she then was, to this Fury of a Woman who has always pass'd for a Devil, and who in Reality is one. I wrote a Copy of my Promise of Marriage, in order to show it her, without trusting in her Hands either of the Originals ; I could easily do it, without breaking open my Wife's Parcel, because there was no Alteration, but changing the Names, as I have already told you ; and I transcrib'd it from the Original of her Promise to me.

I had scarce done writing, when I heard the Coach stop at the Door ; hereupon I made my Wife retire into the other Room, and lock'd her in. This done, I let the Hangings fall down, and placed Chairs before the Door, which could not be seen, because it was a great deal higher then the Floor where we were ; after which, I went to meet *Madeleine de L'Epine*.

She was surpriz'd at seeing me where she did not expect me ; walk up, Madam, said I, giving her my Hand, 'twas I who sent for you, your Daughter only lent me her Note. Where is she, Sir, answered she ? At Mass, reply'd I, she will be here in a Moment. She walk'd up, and enter'd the Chamber, after

er which, I went down and discharged the Coach, that she might not have a Mind to return very soon. After this, I went up again, double-lock'd the Door, and took out the Key without her perceiving it: She thought the Furniture very handsome, and ask'd whose Room it was, but I soon put an End to these Questions, and made her sit down in a Place from whence my Wife might easily hear every Word that was spoken.

Can you guess, Madam, said I, sitting down by her, what can have induced your Daughter to send for you, and not wait your coming? No, Sir, answered she: Do you know? Yes, Madam, reply'd I, I know very well: 'Tis a Thing she has done without consulting you upon it, but she has therein only fail'd in the Respect she owes you, and she thought that you had so much Value for me, as to grant her *her* Pardon at my Request. She imagin'd, pursued I, that she might be marry'd without your Consent, and likewise that I should prevail on you to consent: 'Tis a done Thing, all the Noise that you can possibly make, will signify nothing; I am even to inform you, that she is entring upon the fifth Month of her Pregnancy, and that 'tis above ten since she was first my Wife.

I could hardly make an End, so often did she interrupt me. What, said she, the Slut is marry'd! She is with Child! I'll strangle

her ; where is she ? 'Tis you that have debauched her, I will go and acquaint your Father, that he may send you to *St. Lazarus*, and I will put her between four Walls. Am not I very unfortunate ? After having brought her up so well, I am ruined, my Cause is lost, and I am reduced to Beggary. Where is she, that I may strangle her ? That wicked Slut, that unnatural Wretch, that Jade : In short, she said so much, that I can remember no more.

I thought that if I interrupted her, she would only rave the longer ; for, besides that it would be making her obstinate, it would likewise give her Time to recover Breath ; and if I spoke not a Word, she would be pacify'd of herself. I suffer'd her then to say what she would, she was in an outragious Fury, and breath'd nothing but Fire and Flames. She look'd in the Bed, behind it, underneath, and every where, where she imagin'd her Daughter might be, but could not perceive that there was another Room. She then ask'd me again where she was, that she might strangle her. 'Tis a contriv'd Thing, said she ; and indeed I was very glad I had saved my Wife from her Rage.

She would then have gone out, but as the Door was double-lock'd, and I had the Key ; she was obliged to stay. She began again then, and was just going to fly at my Face, and tear my Eyes out ; however she forbore,

forbore, notwithstanding her Anger was at the Height : In short, she held on two Hours without growing a Jot more moderate, and without my opening my Mouth. When I found her a little recover'd, I spoke in my Turn ; and because with some Tempers it is proper not to humble one's self, because that only renders them more untractable, I began in as haughty a Tone as she.

Wherefore, I told her without Ceremony, that it was true I was marry'd to her Daughter without asking her Consent, because I did not value it, neither did I value it then ; and that I would do the same Thing if it were to be done again ; that I did not think I should have done her any Injury, by allying myself to her Family, nor that her Daughter could have been blam'd for giving me her Hand ; that I was of Age, as she knew very well herself ; that if she was so much scandaliz'd thereat, she might even do what she thought proper ; that she might, (as she had threaten'd,) go and complain to my Father, who would revenge me sufficiently of her, and her rough Usage, without my intermeddling therein ; that I should come off, (as she had said herself,) for being confin'd some Time at Saint *Lazarus*, and should easily restore myself to my Father's Favour, by abandoning her Daughter ; but that for her Part, she would be absolutely ruin'd in the Opinion of all Persons
of

of Honour ; for being the Cause of her Daughter's being no longer look'd upon but as the *Whore*, (I spoke the Word out) of the Man who had marry'd her, and whose lawful Wife she actually was.

I added, that her Law-Suit, which she had so much at Heart, would be gain'd never the sooner thereby ; and that my Father, who was a Man of Honour and Integrity, far from thinking himself obliged to her for her shameful and unworthy Sacrifice, would look upon her as a Fury, and a Devil incarnate, who had made her own Blood fall a Victim to Fordid Interest ; that the whole World would abhor her, and that she would have as many Enemies as there would be Persons of Honour who would hear of her Baseness ; that, on the contrary, if she would do as Honour and Prudence directed, she would fall into none of these Inconveniences ; that her Daughter and I had already been married above ten Months, without its being suspected by any one, or ever herself, and that we might continue so still ; that, as for her great Belly, she needed only to pretend to carry her to a Convent, where her Daughter should beg her publickly to put her, and that she might come and Lye-in at the same Place where we were then talking ; that as to her Law-Suit, I would do her all the Service that lay in my Power, because her Interest would become mine ; that she would

no longer be reduced to the Necessity of borrowing to carry it on, since my Purse would always be open to her ; and that, in short, I would do every Thing for her, which could be expected from a good Son-in-Law, or a good Son : But, on the contrary, that I would leave no Stone unturn'd to be revenged, if she should attempt any Thing against my Wife and me ; that, as for her Daughter, I should be able very easily to save her from my Father's Anger, by sending her out of his Way ; that, 'twas true, I could not avoid giving the Consent that would be required of me, to set aside our Marriage ; but, pursued I, pretending to be in a violent Passion, no Body shall prevent my giving her enough to live on, independent of you ; and, to begin, assure yourself that you have seen her for the last Time that ever you shall see her ; that before an Hour be past, she shall be gone from *Paris*, and that I won't leave her, 'till I have put her in a Place where she shall have nothing to fear but my changing ; and not either your mischievous Temper, your bad Heart, or my Father's Anger. Do as you please, continued I, opening the Door, you may be gone when you will, since you have no more Reason ; but, think, however, on what you are going to do, and take Care you don't treasure up for yourself a Remorse that will outlast your Life.

I was

I was in the right, in thinking that a little Roughness would bring me off better then all my Submissions. She ask'd me where her Daughter was, but in a manner that made me find she began to be appeas'd. Your Daughter is just by, said I, she hears you, and does well not to come in your Way, to be ill us'd ; it is in her Power to come if she pleases ; but if she should offer at it before I call her, I would show her before you, that I am her Husband, and her Master, and would reward her for exposing herself unseasonably.

As I pretended in my Turn, to be actually incensed, she grew entirely calm. But, Sir, said she, if *M. Desprez* should chance to know it, for I am only angry upon his Account, what would he not do ? When I found her tractable, I made her understand how easy it would be to keep it secret, and that it having been conceal'd so long, might very well be so yet longer ; she partly agreed to it, and ask'd again to see her Daughter. I told her there was no Hurry for that, and that I would not let her appear 'till she was throughly pacify'd.

Then I gave her to know that the main Point of all was, that our Marriage was good, and could not be set aside, unless I consented, or a superiour Power would have it so. I shew'd her all the Precautions that had been taken, and to convince her there-
of,

of, proposed to send for the Priest who had marry'd us : She begg'd I wou'd.

He did not expect such a Summons, and seem'd a little surpriz'd on entring the Room, but soon recover'd himself. As 'twas he who had done all, and was bound in Honour to maintain it, he show'd her that all the Care had been taken that was possible ; that the Marriage was good, both in the Main, and in the Forms ; in the Main, because 'twas a Sacrament ; and in the Forms, because I was of Age, and was not engaged to any one whatsoever : In short, he said so much, that she submitted.

She ask'd again to see her Daughter ; I thought then that there was nothing more to be fear'd, wherefore I pull'd away the Chairs, open'd the Door of the other Room, took her by the Hand, and led her to her Mother, at whose Feet she fell. Her Mother raised her up with Tears, my Wife wept also, and excused herself the best she cou'd ; after which, I embraced them both, very glad that *Mademoiselle de L' Epine* was become tractable at last.

Every thing was thus made up at once ; I kept my Mother-in-Law and the Priest to dine with us ; we had no need of hiding our selves ; and, in Effect, had it not been for my Imprudence, nothing would have been discover'd yet. We concluded that my Wife should come the next Day, and continue in

N her

her Chamber, to go out no more until she should be brought to Bed ; and that *that* very Evening, she should desire her Mother, before all the Company, to give her Leave to go, and be some Time in a Convent ; that next Day her Mother should make as if she was going to carry her thither, and should bring her where we then were.

Mademoiselle de L' Epine went out first, and my Wife was left alone with me, when she told me that she was surprized at the Haughtiness wherewith I had treated her Mother, but that in the End she had found I was in the right, since every Thing had succeeded the better for it. All the Answer I gave her, was to kiss her, and to tell her with an Embrace, I shall be permitted then at last, my dear Child, to spend some Nights with you, and have you wholly at my Disposal. She only answer'd me with an Embrace likewise, and a Smile, which was more expressive then all the Words she could have used.

I desired her to buy that very Day every Thing that she should want, to the End that she might not be obliged to stir out at all ; she answer'd me that she wanted nothing, but that if she should, our Landlady should get it her, without her going abroad. This Woman, who was fond of her to the last Degree, had offer'd her Service to wait on her ; and as she did not debase herself therein,

therein, I took her at her Word, telling her that I should be obliged to her for her Care of her, which should be rewarded, and that she would save us from the Necessity of trusting to a Woman who might betray us. Every Thing being thus resolved on, I went away, and promised to dine there the next Day with her Mother.

They put in Execution what had been concluded on ; I found them both together, we din'd there, and I absolutely commanded my Wife not to keep *Lent*. I lay there that Night for the first Time, and spent some other Nights with her there, during the four Months she staid there, but very seldom, for fear of causing Suspicion. This would have continued 'till the Time of her Delivery, had it not been for the Misfortune that happen'd, which was caused by my Imprudence, has cost her her Life, is the Cause of my present Affliction, and besides has given the World such an ill Opinion of me. I must tell it you, but give me Time to take a little Breath, the melancholy Things which I have to relate, quite overwhelm my Spirits. In Effect, he was quite bath'd in Tears, and seem'd rather dead then alive ; he continued some Time without speaking, after which, he went on as follows.

I had been two Days without seeing her ; she was ready to Lye-in, at least she was very much indisposed ; she found herself worse

then ordinary, and not knowing the Cause which had hinder'd my visiting her, she sent me a Letter by our Landlord, which I read, and was preparing to go to her. As I was crossing our Court-Yard, I met my Father, who made me step with him into his Closet : There he spoke to me of an Employment which he intended to procure me, and likewise let fall some Words about a Match which he design'd me.

Although he only mention'd this as a Thing distant enough, I cou'd not help being troubled to that Degrée, that I knew not what to answer. I drew out my Handkerchief to hide my Concern, and without minding what I did, let drop my Wife's Letter which I had just receiv'd. I went out then without gathering it up, and hasten'd to see my Spouse for the last Time that ever I was to behold her.

She told me after the first Embraces, that she was not well-look'd after in the Lodgings where she was, and begg'd me to allow her to accept of her Mother's Offer to Lye-in at her House ; that she was very sensible that she cou'd not go a Week longer ; that her Sisters and Brother knowing that she was marry'd, without knowing to whom, far from being scandaliz'd thereat, were infinitely desirous of seeing her, and that the Secret would be equally safe, because she should make use of the same Midwife as her Mother had used for-

formerly. *Mademoiselle de L' Epine* was present at this Discourse, she espoused her Daughter's Part, and made an End of persuading me.

One has Forebodings of what will happen, but nevertheless one can't avoid one's Misfortune. A thousand Reasons ought to have hinder'd my consenting to this Removal. I told her them, I join'd Entreaties to my Reasons ; I had said to them a hundred Times, that I would be in my Wife's Chamber when she should be brought to Bed, and that I had a secret Dread of this Removal, which I opposed as much I could. My Spouse's Misfortune and mine would have it, that she made use of all the Power she had over me, to prevail upon me. I thought it would be cruel to refuse a Wife in the Condition mine then was, the Favour she ask'd of me with Hands uplifted. Wherefore, although against my Will, I consented ; that was the Cause of her Death.

The Time was appointed at Eight next Morning, to remove her to her Mother's, who, in the mean while, got ready every Thing that was necessary for her convenient Reception. I did not leave her 'till very late that Night, and was a thousand Times ready to recall the Consent I had given her : And as I did not expect to see her again in a long Time, and after her Delivery, we took a very tender Farewel of each other. Alas ! said

said he, with a Flood of Tears, we did not imagine that it was to be eternal, and that we should never see each other more.

I return'd to my Father's, where I perceived nothing extraordinary, although the Face of every Thing was very much changed there with respect to me ; and not having been fore-warned by any one, because no Body knew any Thing of the Matter, I deliver'd myself up to the mortal Stroke which he was preparing for me. The very Moment that I left his Closet, he was going to follow me, and passing by the Place where I stood to speak with him, he perceived a Letter, which he had not seen at first, because his Bureau was between him and that.

He gather'd it up, without minding what it was, and imagining it was one of those he had received that Morning, he threw it upon his Bureau, without making any farther Reflection thereon. But observe the Fatality of Things ! This Letter falling upon other Papers, threw them down with it, he took them up again, and as this fatal Letter happen'd to open the second Time, he saw it was a Woman's writing, otherwise he would have treated it with as much Indifference as at first. At the Sight of a Hand that was unknown to him, he read it, and found it as follows.

L E T T E R.

HAVE you abandon'd me, my dear Spouse ? What ! In the Condition wherein I am, without Strength, in a continual Languor, and waiting only for the Moment of bringing into the World, by my Delivery, the precious Pledge which you have intrusted with me, of your Affection, and our Union ; do you pass two whole Days without seeing me ? Alas ! The most confirm'd Health that ever I enjoy'd, has always been impair'd, when I have been only One without embracing you ; and at present, when I have need of your Presence, to aid and encourage me in the Pains that are foretold me, you seem to have forgot me. In the Name of God, come to Day, if you would save the Life of your Wife,

MARY-MAGDALEN DE L'EPINE.

I leave you to imagine to what an Excess of Passion this transported him ; Persons naturally violent, are more to be dreaded in their Silence, than when they break out into a Fury : He said not one Word, but resolv'd to part us for ever, by securing me, and driving the Mother and Daughter to all the Extremities imaginable. He went to the Palais according to Custom, and gave Orders

ders to an Officer, with six Archers, to be next Morning at the Inn of the *Flanders Coaches*, at the End of St. *Martin's Street*. He did all he could to be authoriz'd in what he designed, and did it so secretly, that not one of his Servants knew any Thing of the Matter. He din'd in the City, and did not return Home 'till Night, giving Orders when he came in, that I should be brought to him as soon as I should return Home.

This was not 'till about Eleven; he spoke not a Word to me which cou'd give me the least Suspicion: He only ask'd me if I had any Busines in the Morning, and said that he had a Mind to carry me to a Place, whither he ought to have conducted me a long while ago. I thought it was to see the Father of a young Lady, whereof he had spoken to me: With this Thought I told him that I would accompany him where he pleas'd, and that the only Busines I had, was to go to the *Palais* to the Pleadings. So much the better said he, we will go together at Six in the Morning, where I intend to carry you; I shall not stay long there, nor you neither.

We went then into his Coach exactly at Six, on the 11th of June, the longest Day in the Year, an unfortunate Day, which I shall remember as long as I live. He made the Coach stop at the Inn of the *Flanders Coaches*, and bid me follow him up into a Chamber.

Chamber. As the Lady's Father, to whom I thought he was going to carry me, liv'd in the Country, I imagin'd he had been lately come to Town, and that he lodg'd there, wherefore I went up without any Suspicion. But, as soon as I enter'd this Room, I found my self seiz'd by four swinging Rascals, who began by taking away my Sword ; insomuch that I was rather dead than alive. You shall not stay long here, Sir, said he, you shall soon be carry'd elsewhere.

This is the Cause, added he, showing me this fatal Letter ; do you know it again ? I would have fallen at his Feet, but he turned his Back upon me, and addressing himself to the Officer, who was there ; don't let him speak to any one, pursued he, and conduct him, without Scandal, in Half an Hour where I order'd you. This done, he went out, and in all Probability hasten'd to St. Lazarus, to give Orders for my Reception.

The Officer, who remain'd with me, desired me to change my Cloaths, and gave me another Suit of mine that was richer, and quite new. I ask'd him for what Reason I should dress myself better to go to Prison ? 'Tis your Father's Will, said he, to the End that it may be believ'd that you are going into the Country. I saw then plainly that if I did not pull off my Cloaths willingly, they wou'd pull them off for me in Spite of

my Teeth, wherefore I did not oblige them to desire me any more, but pull'd it off. And I have heard since that they dress'd therein an Archer, who was of my Shape and Age, and that this Rascal being follow'd by my Footman, and both of them mounted upon my Horses, had gallop'd through the whole Street, and that the Rogue, my Footman, staying behind at an Alehouse to drink, had told several Persons that I was going into the Country, and should not return very soon. This it was that gave Rise to the Report that I had forsaken my Wife, who, for her Part, was us'd much worse than I.

I would have protested against the Violence that was done me, by Reason of my being of Age; but the Officer would not receive my Protests. I fell at his Feet, and offer'd him my Purse, wherein were *Fifty Louis d' Or*, with my Diamond Ring, my Watch, and a Note for what he pleased, to permit me to write a Word to my Wife, and engage him to deliver it to her. I swore to him all the Oaths imaginable that I would share my Estate and my Fortune with him, if he would do me that Favour; and threaten'd him, on the contrary, with the severest Re-sentment that should lay in my Power, if he refused me; but he was equally unmovable by my Prayers, my Presents, my Offers, and my Threatnings. I was carried then to St. Lazarus

zarus about Eight o'Clock, exactly at the Time that my poor Spouse was breathing her last.

My Father return'd Home when he left St. *Lazarus* and went from thence on Foot to *Mademoiselle de L' Epine's*. His Visit surpriz'd her very much, but he surpriz'd her yet much more, when he told her the Reason, and in such Language, and such a Rage, that Passion only could excuse : He even us'd her like the worst of Women. In vain did she swear to him that she was innocent of our Marriage ; and that if she had her Daughter at Home, she would punish her ; He would not hear her Excuses, but us'd her like a Suborner, and my Wife like a lewd Woman and a Prostitute, whom he swore to have confin'd.

He was in the Height of his Passion when my Wife arriv'd at her Mother's ; she had a Master-Key, which hinder'd her knocking at the Door, and the Length of the Entry prevented her hearing the Noise that was made above. She had sent away the Chair that had brought her, not thinking she should have any farther Occasion for it, since she was at her Mother's, and she had no Notice that my Father was there, because that at the Noise he made, the Chamber-Maid, the Cook, and the Footman, had run up Stairs.

She went up then without knowing in the least what was doing, and all my Father's

Anger and Rage gather'd new Strength at her Sight. He us'd such Language to her as she had never been us'd to hear, where-upon she fell in a Swoon upon the Stairs, and roll'd down above twenty Steps. Her Mother, in whom such a Sight ought to have awaken'd all her Tenderness, treated her in the lamentable Condition wherein she lay, with more Hard-heartedness than the most savage Beast ; and far from giving her any of the Assistance that was necessary, she refused to acknowledge her for her Daughter : See, Sir, said she, speaking to my Father, whether I was the Cause of their Marriage. This said, she sent immediately for another Chair, and in a Swoon, and streaming with Blood, as my Wife then was, she had her taken by the Chair-men, who carry'd her in by the Neck and Heels like a dead Beast, and in this Condition sent her to the *Hotel-Dieu*. What Cruelty ! What Barbarity ! Cou'd any one sacrifice her own Blood more inhumanly, to the Fear of losing an Estate ?

How great soever my Father's Anger was, such a moving Sight appeas'd it ; the Hard-heartedness of this Mother-in-Law made him relent. He was so much surpriz'd, that he could not speak one single Word ; Pity began to take Possession of his Heart ; he compassionated a Woman, whose Beauty he had admired, and whose Destiny he began to lament : He had a Design against her Marriage,

riage, but not against her Life, nor that of her Child. He was even sorry that he had suffer'd himself to be transported to such an Excess, and went out of the House more confounded at what he had seen, than this unnatural Mother herself.

As soon as he got Home, he sent her Word that he did not hinder her from rendering her Daughter what Assistance she stood in Need of, in her present Condition, and that he even begg'd her to take Care of her, and of the Child. She, on the other Hand, who, as she told me, had only been incited to what she did, through a damnable Policy, to preserve herself in my Father's good Graces, was afflicted to the last Degree, for having carried Things so far, and had only sent her to the *Hotel-Dieu*, in order to shew him the little Concern she had for her ; but with an Intention to go and fetch her back again immediately, and have her carry'd to her Chamber.

She went then to this Hospital, where she found her Daughter ; but in what Condition ? Good God ! She saw a Woman as beauteous as an Angel, and handsomely dress'd, drawing towards her End. She would have carried her Home, but she was not in a Condition to admit of being removed : All that could be done, was to carry her into a little private Room ; for my poor Wife was then dying. She was fetch'd out of her first Swoon by

the

the Motion of the Chair wherein they had carried her ; and she fell into another a Minute after, without having had the Strength to utter one Word.

When she came out of her second Swoon, she found herself upon a sorry Bed, in a Place, (what shall I call it ?) in the Company, and rank'd in the Number, of fifty Thousand common Whores, the wretched Refuse of the Debauchery and Stews of *Paris*. What Horror ! Scarcely had she open'd her dying Eyes, when they mov'd her into the Chamber before-mention'd, in Presence of her Mother ; they try'd to comfort her, but the Stroke was too severe not to be mortal.

She remain'd about an Hour without showing any Signs of Life, but by distracted Looks; which she cast on every Side at a Venture ; at last she open'd her Mouth. Her first Care was to inquire for me ; and they told her I was not there ; whereupon she call'd for Pen, Ink, and Paper. They would have prevented her writing, because she was not in a Condition for it, without doing herself farther Harm : But she redoubled her Intreaties so earnestly, that at last they brought them. She wrote then 'till she was seiz'd with Convulsions, and 'twas this very Paper which you saw, and which I wear upon my Heart : Read it ; I took it from him, and with great Difficulty read as follows.

L E T T E R :

L E T T E R.

I AM dying; I did not expect so many Misfortunes at once: I don't enquire after the Author's of my Death, because I resolve to forgive all the World. Farewel, my dear Husband, you will have nothing left of me but the Remembrance. I feel your Child, it is dead; I am dying likewise; if I could embrace you before my — —

I could read no more, the rest being neither legible, nor coherent: He took the Letter from me, kiss'd it, and placed it again upon his Heart; and with much Difficulty, (so much was he interrupted by his Tears and Sobs,) after which he continued his melancholy Story.

The Convulsions seiz'd her, as I was telling you, and prevented her ending her Letter; she came again a little to herself, and desired Absolution, which was given her; after which, she was delivered of a dead Child, and in a Quarter of an Hour expired in the midst of her Pains, and weltring in her Blood, without uttering a Sylable against any one whatever.

Such, pursued he, all bath'd in Tears, such was the End of my dear Wife, and of our Love, which Loss I shall eternally mourn. This Part renew'd all his Griefs, and even render'd them more violent; and although

Heaven

Heaven has not given me a Soul very susceptible of others Misfortunes, I could not help weeping with him. I was indeed moved with this Relation, and his Actions ; and I perceive you are so too, said *Dupuis*, to all the Company, who indeed had Tears in their Eyes. Make an End of your Story, I beg you, Sir, said *Madame de Contamine*, and we will tell you afterwards our Thoughts of this melancholy Adventure.

Dupuis went on as follows : As for me, continued *Desprez*, after having recover'd himself a little, I was, as I have told you, at St. *Lazarus*, wherefore I cou'd not be inform'd of this Death, which happen'd much about the same Time that I went thither. I remain'd there a Week with incomprehensible Impatience ; during which, there came to me every now and then some of those good Missionaries to keep me Company ; they endeavour'd to comfort me, and by little and little, made me apprehend yet some greater Misfortune than my Confinement : At last, they inform'd me of my Wife's Death. Then it was that I lamented the Loss of my Liberty, because I could not revenge myself, nor yet dye according to the Dictates of my Despair. I did, and said a thousand Extravagancies ; in vain did they strive to comfort me for three Months : They said that I was delirious, and the Cause of my Grief was too just to set any Bounds to it.

These

These good Men sympathiz'd with it ; they afflicted themselves with me, to render me tractable : If they have not succeeded, at least they have appeased those violent Transports that inspired me with nothing but the Thoughts of committing Murder. I did not leave them, 'till they saw me composed enough not to fear any desperate Deed from me ; but far from returning to *Paris*, I have been in *Normandy*, at a Seat of my Brother-in-Law, *M. de Guerville's*, from whence I have been return'd but a Week.

As soon as I arriv'd here, I went to the *Hotel-Dieu*, where I have mourn'd the Loss of my poor Wife ; I ask'd for the Place where her Body lay ; she and her Child being buried there together, and swooned away upon it : I can go thither no more. I heard that her Mother had taken away a Letter that she wrote. I went to her, she gave it me, 'tis that which you have read. I live now only with Design to be revenged of this Mother-in-Law ; whom I intend to cross to the utmost of my Power ; notwithstanding the Submissions she has made to me, the Pardons she has ask'd me, and the Sorrow she expresses for the Death of her Daughter : To be reveng'd likewise of the Rogue of an Officer, who arrested me, and so cruelly refused me the melancholy Consolation which I begg'd, of writing a Word to my poor Wife, and carrying it to her : As for

the Rogue my Footman, although the least to blame, I am already revenged of him ; and when I have satisfy'd my Resentment, I shall see how Fate will dispose of the Rest of my Life.

Now see, after the Loss I have sustain'd, if I am not more to be pitty'd then blamed ; and whether 'tis true, as 'tis reported, that I forsook poor *Magdalen*, and am the Cause of her Death ? I, who would purchase her Life at the Expence of mine, and a hundred thousand others, if I had them to give for her.

This, Ladies, pursued *Dupuis*, is the Way that *Desprez* told me his Story ; and I'm not Judge of the Looks of Men, if his Grief was not very Sincere. He has not declared his Marriage for several Reasons ; the chief whereof are, that the Place where she died, would be no Honour to him : 'Tis true, he was not the Cause thereof ; but to justify himself, he must have declared all, and thereby it would have been known that his Father was partly the Cause, by his violent Passion, which is not known by any one, none but the People of the House having been Witnesses thereof. Besides, the Deceased would not have reap'd any Benefit from this Honour, but only her Mother, whose Ruin he had sworn. He still moves my Compassion ; I don't believe it is possible to be more deeply afflicted.

He vow'd to me, that he would preserve an eternal Fidelity to the Memory of his Spouse ; and he has done it : For, whatever Methods his Father took during his Life, he cou'd never oblige him to marry ; and at present that he is his own Master, and possessed of one of the best Posts in the Law, the Manner of his Living proves sufficiently that he has broke off all Correspondence with the Fair Sex ; and that his Thoughts are wholly bent upon Vengeance.

The Officer has found it to his Cost ; he has been obliged to leave *France* ; *Desprez* had stuck so close to his Skirts, and examin'd so narrowly into his Life, that he found enough to have had him broken upon the Wheel ; and nothing but his Flight has saved him from Justice, and from the Resentment of *Desprez*, who is still in Pursuit of him.

M. Desprez, his Father, had conceived such an Aversion against *Mademoiselle de L'Epine*, that he could never bear the Sight of her, after her Barbarity ; and his Son has solicited him so powerfully, that he has given up the Judgment of her Law-Suit of his own Accord, and it is not yet ended, because *Desprez* has employed all his Interest to make her lose it.

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